
00058557

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY-1.

Digitized with financial assistance from



HT Parekh
FOUNDATION

An Initiative by
HDFC
WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018

Thousand Miles of Road Travel

PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
LONDON



A PEEP AT WINDERMERE.

A

DRIVE THROUGH ENGLAND

OR A

Thousand Miles of Road Travel

BY

JAMES JOHN HISSEY

AUTHOR OF 'AN OLD-FASHIONED JOURNEY' ETC.

58557

'*Turpe est in patriâ vivere, et patriam ignorare*'—Linnæus





WITH TWENTY FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

LONDON

RICHARD BENTLEY & SON NEW BURLINGTON STREET

Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen

1885

[*All rights reserved*]


00058557

In Memory of

MY DEARLY LOVED AND LOVING

WIFE

WHOSE SYMPATHETIC COMPANIONSHIP MADE MY

WANDERINGS BY ROAD SO DELIGHTFUL

PREFACE.

THIS volume is the simple record of a most delightful excursion, 'A Cruise on Wheels' of nearly a thousand miles, passing through some of the most beautiful portions of England.

To the writer it appears that no method of seeing a country or a pleasanter way of spending a summer holiday could be desired, no form of travel so thoroughly enjoyable, or on the whole so independent, as a driving tour.

The journey herein related took some three months to perform, and, consisting as it did of a round drive from London to Scotland and back, was a most comprehensive one, and gave to those who made it a store of pleasant memories, a treasure gallery of rural and home scenes never to be forgotten.

When travelling, we averaged as nearly as possible twenty miles a day, resting our horses occasionally, and with easy driving—in spite of the many trying and long stages and inferior accommodation in places—they rather improved than otherwise on the road.

We found our expenditure considerably less than it would have been had we been merely staying at some fashionable watering-place hotel, seeing nothing of particular interest. In calculating the cost of the expedition, it must be borne in mind our horses had to be kept somewhere, whether travelling or at home, and to the credit side (though I have not reckoned this) it must be remembered our travelling expenses were *nil*, save a trifle for turnpikes, of which but few now remain.

Perhaps I should add, the journey, taken for pleasure only and with no idea of writing a book, was made a few years ago, so some of the remarks regarding hotels may or may not be correct at the present date.

J. J. H.

SOUTH KENSINGTON: 1885.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

The Start—How our Journey came about—Driving Tours, their Pleasures and Advantages—On the Road—English Scenery—A Pleasant Stage—Town *versus* Country—The sort of Carriage to Drive—Salt Hill—A Forsaken Inn—Slough—A Chat with our Landlady—Old Legends and Traditions. . . 1

CHAPTER II.

Stoke Pogis—Windsor Castle—Bray Church and its adhesive Vicar—Cliefden Woods—Highwaymen's Retreat—The British Tourist—Maidenhead Bridge—A Country Lane—An English Hedge-row—Builders and Buildings—Great Marlow—A Row on the River—An Old-world Mansion—Thames Fishing—Nearly coming to Grief—A Legend of Marlow Bridge—We run against a Character—A Haunted House—A Peculiar Ghost 12

CHAPTER III.

A Late Start—A Drive in the Dark—A Dilapidated Signpost—A Curious Inscription—Oxford—Architects and Artists—The English Climate—Woodstock—A Comfortable Inn—Country Hostelries—The Tradition of Rosamond's Bower—Rosamond's Tomb—Blenheim Palace—An Ancient Doorway—Sir John Vanbrugh—An Epitaph—Wild England—A Rough Road—Chapel House—The Rollich Stones—Rough Quarters—Old Buildings 29

CHAPTER IV.

Scotch Firs—The old-fashioned Flail in use—A Picturesque Village—Market Crosses—A Homelike Country—An Old Farmhouse—A Sleepy Town—A Hunt for Quarters—Accommodated at last—A Forsaken Hotel—A Stupid Ostler—Deserted Stables—A Chat with our Landlord—A Bad Out-

PAGE

look—A History of Chapel House—Dr. Johnson's Opinion of Taverns—Old English Hostels—Our Bedroom—A Tour of Discovery—Antique Rooms—The Writing on the Glass 49

CHAPTER V.

A Gloomy Day—Lights and Shadows—A Wayside Monument—Across Country—A Doubtful Lane—In a Fix—A Camp Out—Wild Flowers—Home and Foreign Scenery—A Capital Road—A Rainbow—Coventry—A Quaint Old City—An Old Steeple—The Restorations of Ancient Buildings—A Punning Epitaph—A Fine Hall—Origin of the term 'To send to Coventry.' 66

CHAPTER VI.

A Bad Road—A Mining Country—Old Mines—Lopsided Houses—Nuneaton—An Old Hostelrie—Signboards—A Dangerous Bit of Road—An Obelisk by the Wayside—A Quaint Village and Inn—Artists and Photographers—A Classical Church—An Old-world Hamlet—Village Names—Ashby-de-la-Zouch—A Visitors' Book—Bathing Establishment—The Saline Waters—A Bad Speculation—The Castle—Old Feudal Strongholds and their Builders—The General History of English Castles—The Restorer in his Glory—A Fine Gothic Monument 77

CHAPTER VII.

A Delightful Road—Charnwood Forest—A Ruined Manor House—A Long Descent—An Extensive Panorama—A Long Bridge—Swarkestone—A Hunters' Inn—A Collision Averted—Windmills—A Sudden Change in the Weather—A Race against Time—A Thunderstorm—About Lightning—Hotel Museum—Old Coaching Bills—Relics of Richard III.—A Fresh Morning—A Stone Country—Picturesque Hillsides—Mountainous Countries *versus* Level Ones—Belper—Old Mills—Ambergate—The Vale of Cromford—The Derwent—A Bit of an Old Wall—A Hill-climbing Railway—A Comfortable Hotel—Inn Gardens—An Evening Prospect. 92

CHAPTER VIII.

Round about Matlock—The High Tor—A Showman's Paradise—An Amusing Encounter—Caves—The Crystallized Cavern

PAGE

—A Bridge swept away—Nature's Workshops—Petrifying Wells—The Cumberland Cavern—Our Guide—The English Tourist—A Wonderful Jump—Characteristic Old Bridges—Mountain Air—Crich Hill—A Geological Marvel—A Terrible Landslip—Derbyshire Villages—Romantic Scenery—Wingfield Manor—The Architects of Old—Ancient Buildings—A Grand Old Ruin 110

CHAPTER IX.

Hardwick Hall—Mines—An Old Distich—A Many-windowed House—Bess of Hardwick—A Very Much Married Lady—A Poor Consolation—Building Bess—An Old Country—Tradition at Fault—Guide-books and their Writers—An Old-world Home—Interior of Hardwick—Ancient Furniture—A Bit of the Black Country—Chesterfield—Our Forefathers and Ourselves—Sheffield—Disagreeable Driving—A Wonderful Town—An Artificial Volcano—'Far from the Madding Crowd'—A Hill Stream—Landscapes, Ideal and Real 129

CHAPTER X.

Penistone—A Desolate Village—A Hunt for the Landlord—A Cheerless Country—A Vast Solitude—A Sea of Moors—Mountain and Moorland Air—Huddersfield—Nature's Recreation Grounds—A Country of Towns—Sunshine and Shower—Halifax—Travellers' Tales—Gibbet Law—A Thieves' Litany—A Steep Road—Wreathing Mists—Difficult Steering—A Hailstorm—A Purple Sea—Curious Boulders—A Sphinx—Keighley—Skipton Town and Castle—The Shepherd Lord—Changing Scenery—An *al fresco* Lunch—Settle—An Ebbing and Flowing Well—Unfortunate Tourists—Clapham—Pine Forests 144

CHAPTER XI.

A Romantic Village—Ingleborough Mountain—Guides and their Prey—Caverns—A Quiet Retreat—Holiday Haunts at Home—A Golden Sea—Kirkby-Lonsdale—A Beautiful Old Bridge—A Narrow Roadway—Mists and Fogs—Milnthorpe—A Welcome—Weather-bound—A Grey Picture—A Transformation Scene—A Heronry—Levins Hall—Curious Old Garden—A Mansion of the Olden Time—Grange—A Perilous Road over Sands—A Stage Coach and Passengers lost in the Quicksands—Cartmel—Unique Old Church—Peculiar Architecture—Ulverston—A Strange Article on Sale—A Red Tarn—Furness Abbey 165

CHAPTER XII.

PAGE

Ruins by Moonlight—The Beauty of an Old Abbey—A Nameless Castle—A Storm—Driving by Night—A Weird Road—Newby Bridge—Road Work and Accidents—A Poor Landlord—A Hot Day—The Enjoyment of the Unknown—A Forsaken Road—A Curious Wayside Hostel—A Picture—Artists and Painting—Bowness—National Playgrounds—A Tourist-haunted Spot—Belle Island—An Exciting Exploit—Low Wood—Lady Holm—Mountain Sunsets—A Romantic Religion—A Moonlight Row on the Lake 185

CHAPTER XIII.

Unpromising Weather—Judging Scenery from Maps—Peculiarities of the Rothay and the Brathay—Weather Effects—Hawkshead—Old Churchyards—Coniston—The Old Man—Ancient Hills—Tarns—Unfinished Scenery—Valley of Tilberthwaite—A Fine Ravine—Langdale Tarn—An Artist at Work—Blea Tarn—Wild Scenery—The Langdale Pikes—Dungeon Gill—A Stony Stage—A Steep Hill—Grasmere—Photography in Colours—A Curiously-shaped Hill—Helm Crag—A Fine Torrent—Unseen Scenery—A Cairn—An Epitaph to a Horse—Wythburn—A Grand Valley—Famous Scenery not always the most beautiful 204

CHAPTER XIV.

Mountains and Mists—Thirlemere—A Neglected Lake—Fine Crag Scenery—Keswick—Portinscale—St. Herbert's Isle—A Glorious Morning—Dr. Syntax's Destination—A Historical Spot—We Purchase a Picture just finished—Grange—The Bowder Stone—A Wild Valley—Our Ancestors' Opinions about Mountains—Solemn Yews—The Birthplace of Storms—Honister Crag and Pass—Caught in a Hailstorm—Dangerous Torrents—Freebooters—Bad Roads and Rough Travelling—Buttermere and its Tradition—Grand Amphitheatre of Mountains—Evening amongst the Hills . . 227

CHAPTER XV.

A Perfect Day—The Pleasures of the Road—A Druids' Circle—The Unknown Past—An Impressive Sight—Threlkeld and its Wonderful Tarns—An Age of Fact—Grand Moorland Scenery—The Beauties of the Moors—Ullswater—Nature as a Painter—Stybarrow Crag—An Old Fight—The King

PAGE

of Patterdale—Brothers Water—Singular Coincidence—A Faithful Dog—Airey Force—A Difficult Task—An Antique Love Story—Dacre Castle—Eamont Bridge—Relics of Prehistoric Times—Mysterious Structures—King Arthur's Round Table—The Giants' Caves 245

CHAPTER XVI.

At Moffat—Sunday Reading and a Sunday Bargain—Southward Bound—Ugly Churches—A Baby Castle—Castle Johnson—A Forsaken Road—Lockerby—Landlords and Landladies—Inns in the 'North Countrie'—A Neglected part of Scotland—Ecclefechan—A Romantic Old Castle—A Wayside Hostelrie—A Relic of the Old Coaching Days—Gretna Green—An Old Bridge—A Storm Imminent—An Artistic Hotel—An American's Opinion of the same—Petrified Potatoes—Carlisle Cathedral and Castle—A Mountainous Prospect—A Curious Wayside Erection—An Old-world Village—A Curious Toll—'A Carriage Propelled by Machinery'—Going to Ruin—Penrith 260

CHAPTER XVII.

Penrith Church—The Giant's Grave—A Curious Method of Painting—The Beacon Hill—Brougham Castle—Anecdote of James I.—The Countess's Pillar—A Peculiar Tree—Old English Villages—A Strange Story—Ancient Manor House—A Ready-made Picture—Appleby Town, Castle, and Church—Cloisters turned into Shops—A Dainty Meal for the Restorer—A Puzzling Epitaph—Centenarians—Relics of Bull-baiting—A Stony Road—Savage Scenery—An Ancient Town—Brough Castle—A Tradition of Past Times—A Curious Dispute—Antiquarians at Fault—'The Wildest Bit of Road in England'—An Antique Chamber . . . 284

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Wet Morning—Doubtful Prospects—A Tour of Inspection—Ancient Crosses—Over Stainmoor—A Bleak Drive—The Rere Cross—A Moorland Prospect—A Lonely Hostelrie—Traditions of the Spital Inn—An Oasis in the Desert—Bowes—Dotheboys' Hall—True Love—An Old Castle—Inn Full—Barnard Castle—No Accommodation—We Secure Quarters at Last—A Kind-hearted Landlady—The Abbey Bridge—The Tees—A Mile of Beauty—Athelstane Abbey—Rokeby—One of Nature's Masterpieces—Greta Bridge—Fox

PAGE

Hall—A Mysterious Sign-post—Milestones—Highest Portion of the old Northern Mail Road—A Coaching Clapham Junction—An Old Manor House—Catterick Bridge Hotel—A Cool Reception—Tales of my Landlord . . 303

CHAPTER XIX.

A Haunted Inn—Early Rising—Old Roman Remains—A Chapel under a Bridge—Lord Darlington's Rooms—Easby Abbey—Richmond Castle—A Legend of King Arthur—Weather-bound—Ripon—A Chamber of Horrors—Fountains Abbey—Harrogate—Knaresborough—The Dripping Well—Saint Robert's Cavern—Eugene Aram and his Victim—Four Jolly Priests—Quaint Old Inscriptions—Bolton Priory—A 'Griesly Sight'—The Abbey Despoilers—The Strid—A Pretty Tradition Spoilt—Ilkley—Mysterious Monuments—The Valley of the Wharfe—Otley—The Ducking Stool—Harewood Castle and Church—The Knights of Old—Ancient Tombs—A Famous Judge—Leeds 331

CHAPTER XX.

A Black Road—Wakefield—A Chapel on a Bridge—Black Barnsley—Sunshine and Mist—Wortley—A Luxurious Meal—Sheffield—A Search for Quarters—Smoke-room Stories—The Moors Again—Rocky Scenery—A Fine Prospect—Hathersage—The Grave of Little John—Castleton and its Wonders—Underground Scenery—The Pass of the Winyates—A Shivering Mountain—A Dangerous Bridge—Buxton—A Crowded Town—A Curious Mishap—Over the Hills—Bakewell and its Old Church—Haddon Hall—An Old-world Hostel—Nature Tamed—Oker Hill and its Tradition—The Darley Yew 356

CHAPTER XXI.

Summer and Autumn—The 'Via Gellia'—Tissington and its Well-dressing—Dovè Dale—A Beautiful River—A Moonlight Drive—Loughborough—A Foggy Day—Leicester—Market Harborough—Naseby—Daventry—An Old Inn—A Picturesque Interior—An Ancient Chair—Old-world Hostels—Stony Stratford—Recollections of Scenery—Telford's Road—Home 377

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

A PEEP AT WINDERMERE . . . . . *Frontispiece*

ON THE RIVER . . . . . *To face page* 23

A MILL BY THE WAY . . . . . „ 53

AN OLD FRIEND . . . . . „ 97

THE VALE OF CROMFORD, LOOKING TOWARDS MATLOCK . . . . . „ 105

HARDWICK OLD HALL . . . . . „ 132

A WAYSIDE BURN . . . . . „ 141

ON THE MOORS . . . . . „ 152

A NORTH-COUNTRY ROAD . . . . . „ 163

MORECAMBE BAY SANDS . . . . . „ 177

WINDERMERE, LOOKING NORTH . . . . . „ 193

RAVINE (TILBERTHWAITE VALLEY) . . . . „ 214

DRUIDICAL CIRCLE NEAR KESWICK . . . . „ 246

NEAR MOFFAT . . . . . „ 262

BROUGHAM CASTLE . . . . . „ 286

BOWES MOOR . . . . . „ 308

ON THE GRETA . . . . . „ 319

RICHMOND CASTLE . . . . . „ 337

BOLTON ABBEY . . . . . „ 348

ON THE EDGE OF THE MOOR . . . . . „ 362

A

DRIVE THROUGH ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

The Start—How our Journey came about—Driving Tours, their Pleasures and Advantages—On the Road—English Scenery—A Pleasant Stage—Town *versus* Country—The sort of Carriage to Drive—Salt Hill—A Forsaken Inn—Slough—A Chat with our Landlady—Old Legends and Traditions.

'And so you are really going to drive all the way to Scotland?'

'Yes, certainly we are.'

'Well, I do envy you. I cannot imagine anything more thoroughly enjoyable; but I see your steeds are getting restless and want to be off, like the driver, eh? I must not keep you any longer, so good-bye and *bon voyage*.'

'*Au revoir*.'

And so, bidding farewell to a friend who had come to see us start, we left London one glorious June morning, bound on a driving tour of several hundred miles to the North Country and home again. It may perhaps be as well here to explain who the 'we' were, the purpose of our journey, and generally to give a few particulars about our method

of travelling. Our tour was all settled and arranged one fine summer's evening. The atmosphere in town of late had been hot and oppressive to an unpleasant degree. The streets appeared to us to be noisier and more dusty than ever before. It was evident we wanted a change. This being carried *nem. con.*, the next thing to do was to fix where we should go. There were fortunately only two of us to decide, my wife and myself; so far, matters were simplified. She suggested Scotland. 'The very place,' I replied—'bracing air and splendid scenery.' That important point settled, how should we go was the next question. By road of course, as we always do; we would drive along the grand old coaching roads of England the whole of the way, and what a glorious drive we should have—some four hundred miles in a direct line, to say nothing of the return journey—through as beautiful a country as the world can show, a country rich in mellow homelike scenery and abounding in historic memories and traditions! Our programme was one not to be despised, nor did we envy the many Britons who seek their pleasures or discomforts in foreign lands. No wonder our spirits rose and our hearts were light as we thought over all the good things the future had in store for us.

As I have before stated, the matter was all arranged and settled one evening; we were even then quite impatient to be off. So the next day the phaeton was sent to the builders to be overhauled, the brake was inspected, the horn and case slung on, the travelling clock fixed in its place, our

waterproofs, maps, guide-books, and all the necessary impedimenta for the journey were looked up. We had still, however, a week on hand before we could conveniently start, and what enjoyable times we spent meanwhile, consulting our maps and road-books, discussing what we would do, where we should go, and what we should see, and how often did we not plan and re-plan our course! It was finally decided roughly—for to bind ourselves in detail to any previously arranged plan would have been to have spoilt entirely the freedom of our journey, which was one of its principal charms—to drive from London to the Lake District and so on into Scotland, returning by another route to be decided upon hereafter. We had some three or four months before us in which to do our journey, and we intended to be perfectly free to wander as we would, only fixing Scotland as the destination to which our wanderings would eventually lead us. Our way would not be a very direct one possibly; direct roads are not always the most beautiful.

A week after our decision, the phaeton was at the door; our horses—old stagers at this kind of work—were pawing the ground evidently anxious for the start. It was a perfect day, neither too hot nor too cold, slight rain had fallen over-night sufficient to allay any dust there might have been. Who would not be contented and supremely happy upon such an occasion and with such weather? for a perfect day in England is as fine a thing as the world can produce, let who will say nay. Our goods and chattels were quickly stowed away in the carriage,

our farewells were said, the words 'All right' were given, the traces tightened, and we found ourselves bowling merrily along the monotonous suburbs of London towards the fresh, free, open country. Our journey was begun!

Driving by road is surely the perfection of travelling where pleasure, not speed, is the chief object in view. How delightful is the utter freedom from time-tables, cabs, booked places, and the endless worry and bother of luggage! And what a pleasure it is to be able to start on your journey just when your inclination may dictate, to leave your hotel door in your own conveyance with all your goods and belongings safely with you, and to arrive at your destination, possibly some delightful old-fashioned country hostelrie, in a similar manner! No annoyance of porters, of being obliged to catch certain trains, and no hasty scampers or anxiety as to being in time for them!

There is nothing gives me greater pleasure, as the glad summer time comes round again, than to find myself once more 'on the road,' to use an expression much in vogue in the old coaching days, to leave behind me for a time the busy hum and din of town life, to be beyond the reach of telegrams and worry of letters, to have all England before me free to wander whither I will. All England I have said, for though it is not a large country compared to others in this world, still it is in a scenic point of view practically inexhaustible. Has not Emerson said 'it would take a hundred years to see England properly?' and, in truth, I would rather say it would

take twice that time, aye, and double it again, and then it would not be long enough for the purpose.

In travelling through our own beautiful country there is no sameness, no weariness. The scenery gradually but continually changes, affording to the traveller a never-ending series of delights. It composes well also; almost any turn in the road of rural England reveals a charming picture; then the variety is endless. The landscape is always altering as the journey progresses in a most pleasing and striking manner. Now you are in an agricultural country abounding in pleasant looking farmhouses with their weather-stained and swallow-haunted barns and gabled out-buildings, the homestead surrounded by fat stacks, giving a suggestion of plenty and prosperity; then comes a change to the wild free moorlands, where the air is always so fresh and bracing, and where you are sure to find an expansive landscape impressing one with an idea of unlimited space and freedom. Anon, perchance, you are running along a well-wooded valley with a bright river for company, and may be the ruins of an old abbey or a feudal castle lie on your route, each with an eventful history well worth investigating and traditions that will amply repay the trouble of unearthing; then again you find yourself in a rich pastoral district, a country of old haunted manor-houses, of ancient parks and stately halls and moated granges; of peaceful gliding rivers and rich mellow woodlands; or it may be you are traversing some of the glorious mountain lands of Scotland or Cumberland or Wales, abounding in heather-clad hills, falls

and foaming torrents, lakes and tarns; or perhaps the grand coast scenery of Devon and Cornwall are claiming your attention; but, wander whither you will, wherever your lot may be cast, the eyes are never wearied and the heart is ever contented and satisfied. After three months of driving through England we have returned home in no way wearied with our trip, but only regretting we were unable to set out at once upon another like excursion. Of how few pleasures, after so long an indulgence in the same, in this matter-of-fact world, could this be said?

Our first day's destination was Slough, the road from London to which place passes through a somewhat flat and uninteresting country, or rather, perhaps, I ought more correctly to say from Hounslow to Slough, for as far as the former place there is simply a succession of houses all the way, and it is only after leaving Hounslow you are really free from these, and genuine green fields come into sight. I think, perhaps, instead of uninteresting, I should rather say comparatively so, for I cannot allow that any dozen miles of England are devoid of interest. However, if the landscape afforded us no striking features or incidents, we felt we were at last in the wide open country, a country bathed in soft sunshine. Green fields were on either side of us, in which the cattle were lazily feeding, munching contentedly the fresh luxuriant grass; the trees were waving their branches to the summer wind; birds were singing merrily overhead, whilst here and there a peep of distant grey-blue wooded hills and spires of far-off village churches piercing the sky-line called

our attention from the immediate foreground. We should have been hard to please had we been discontented with our first day's stage.

London is a delightful place to live in, but it is also a delightful place to get out of. There are times when one grows a little tired of the endless rows of bricks and mortar, of everlasting dinner and other parties more or less entertaining (often, alas! the latter), of kettle-drums and wearying calls, and 'at-homes' and other such-like amenities of modern society. It is a relief and an unalloyed pleasure to leave all these behind, and whatever else pertains to town life, and to get right away into the free, refreshing, and restful country to rough it, even for a change, if necessary, though there is no merit in roughing it just for the sake of so doing, unless you are obliged to, as there is no merit in eating badly cooked food, which, unfortunately, in travelling one is sometimes compelled to do, if you can avoid it. At the same time it is a good thing to alter now and again one's general mode of living, and to lead for the nonce a simple, natural life. Some there are who appear to leave London only to go to some other spot as much like it as possible, some fashionable watering-place, either inland or by the sea, where *tables d'hôte* are the order of the day, and you are always in a crowd, where German bands are to be found discoursing doubtful music, and negro minstrels abound. For such, our mode of spending a summer holiday would not possibly possess many attractions, but for those who love the country and its varying scenes, and they are, after all, the larger

majority, I would most strongly recommend, if they can find the time, to follow in our footsteps, or rather wheel tracks. Those who have never driven across country have indeed a pleasure in store.

The perfection of driving is, in my humble opinion, with a phaeton and pair; but with a single horse and a two-wheeled 'trap' a most thoroughly enjoyable and comparatively inexpensive trip can be taken. My first experience of road work for any extended distance was in company with a clergyman not overburdened with this world's goods, an enthusiastic advocate of driving tours. Together we made an excursion of some hundreds of miles, with a gig and a useful cob. The whole turn-out, horse and conveyance (the latter of country build), probably did not exceed, if it cost, 100*l.* Of course, where economy is not to be considered, there is no conveyance so delightful or generally useful for doing the country as a well-built phaeton and a pair of useful roadsters—a class of horse, by the way, unfortunately not so readily picked up now as formerly. The phaeton is *par excellence* the most perfect carriage for road work; it runs lightly and easily, it is compact and convenient, and affords plenty of room for a reasonable amount of luggage, and space for all necessary tools, &c. You are seated sufficiently high to see the country well, and have a clear and uninterrupted view ahead; there is nothing in front of you but your horses.

Our stage to Slough was an uneventful one, and we duly arrived there in the cool of the evening. We drove through the town to Salt Hill, where we

had been told there was a famous hostelrie—a relic of the old coaching days, and which was still kept open. Upon reaching this, great was our disappointment to find it had only recently been closed. This large, ample, ivy-covered building, even in its deserted state, had such an inviting look, and was so suggestive of old-fashioned comfort, that our regret at not being able to find quarters there was increased on seeing even the forsaken house.[1] However, regrets were of no avail; there was nothing for it but to return to Slough and take what fortune offered us there in the shape of inns. The Crown appeared from the outside appearance the best, so we elected to rest there the night, and soon our belongings were got down and our horses enjoying their well-earned rest. As is our usual custom, we strolled into the inn yard to watch the horses being groomed and inspect their quarters, and to see if we could gather any information, local or otherwise, that might be of interest, from the ostlers, who, as a class, we have generally found to be both original and entertaining characters. Why is it, I wonder, ostlers are so often characters? But there is no rule without an exception, and in the present case the ostler was decidedly the exception. He had nothing to say, and apparently had no ideas beyond his immediate work. It seems he was employed to attend to the inn garden as well as to look after the stables, thus combining two callings, gardener and ostler, but not much of either we were

[1] Since burnt down to the ground. In former days sixty coaches used to change here in the twenty-four hours.

inclined to imagine. Failing to find any entertainment outside, we turned indoors and sought out the worthy landlady. In the present instance the landlady proved to be an agreeable and a communicative sort of body, and we managed to pass a very pleasant half-hour chatting with her. In the course of our conversation we learnt that the garden attached to the hotel belonged at one time to Sir William Herschel, and in it stood his famous telescope. Our hostess also said amongst her many guests she had at different times numerous actors and actresses, who came down here to learn their parts and for a change of air, being at the same time within easy reach of town. Amongst others, a long while ago, Miss Reynolds, of the Haymarket, came here. Her share in the profits during the time *Dundreary* was being played was 12,000*l.* After her last visit she sent the landlady as a present a dozen silver forks and spoons. Judge Hawkins, when Q.C., had apartments here, and in the summer-time, when engaged in town, came down to sleep nearly every night. Our landlady told us she amused herself by farming in a small way. The hotel was her business, farming her pleasure. Fowl-keeping was her especial hobby, connected with which a rather curious coincidence happened to her lately: she had a hen sitting on nine eggs, the whole of which were successfully hatched, and all turned out to be cock birds! She stated, also, her name was Ford, and added laughingly that she was descended from one of the merry wives of Windsor. In the course of our conversation

we elicited nothing of much interest or worthy of being retold, but then, Slough can hardly be called a likely or a romantic spot. I have related our conversation more to show how, even in such an unpromising place, something of passing interest, at any rate, may be gleaned from those you come in contact with, and an idle hour, that would probably otherwise have been wasted, may be pleasantly spent. Besides, you can never tell before you commence a chat what the result may be; there is always the prospect of something worthy of notice turning up. Away in the wilds of Yorkshire, the Border counties, and generally in many of the more remote portions of the kingdom, in some of the old-fashioned country inns, if you are fortunate enough to get hold of the right sort of landlord or ostler, you will be well rewarded if you can manage to lead them on to relate something of what they may chance to know, traditionary or otherwise, of the country, places and people, past and present, around. The task, too, is not a very difficult one. Many a good story of the old coaching days and the knights of the road, and, if you are near the coast, of the times when the smuggler was in his glory, may yet be gathered by a good listener. But you must lead your quarry gently along, and, above all, be patient. These old country people will and can only tell a story in their own roundabout way, and though a long, rambling, and therefore often tiresome way it is, still I am fain to confess the stories nearly always lose by being related in a more sober and condensed manner.

CHAPTER II.

Stoke Pogis—Windsor Castle—Bray Church and its adhesive Vicar—Cliefden Woods—Highwaymen's Retreat—The British Tourist—Maidenhead Bridge—A Country Lane—An English Hedge-row—Builders and Buildings—Great Marlow—A Row on the River—An Old World Mansion—Thames Fishing—Nearly coming to Grief—A Legend of Marlow Bridge—We run against a Character—A Haunted House—A Peculiar Ghost.

WE had a fine warm morning on which to proceed with our journey, and as there was nothing of particular interest to detain us in Slough, we made an early start, the landlady coming to the door to see us off. A mile north from this town is situated the village and picturesque church of Stoke Pogis, with its 'ivy-mantled tower.' In the former the poet Gray resided, and in the 'God's acre' of the latter he lies buried, and it is supposed with much reason to be the scene of his 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard.'[1]

For some distance our road traversed a rather flat country, which however afforded us a glorious view of Windsor's royal castle, standing boldly out a mass of sombre gray, its stern round tower and battlements being gilded by the morning sun. How proudly the grand old castle looked down upon the fair landscape spread out all around and on the silvery Thames, that glides so peacefully along the

[1] A claim, however, it contests with Upton Church, a mile S.E. of Slough.

bright green meadows at its foot! How boldly that massive keep which so nobly dominates the whole pile stands forth on that isolated rock, that rises so strangely from the luxurious Berkshire plain—a plain that has witnessed many great and stirring events connected with our 'rough island's story!' When the castle was first erected by William the Conqueror, probably the whole country round was little else than one gigantic forest: how different is the prospect now!

A few miles farther on our way we caught a glimpse of the ancient square tower of Bray Church, almost hidden in a mass of dense foliage; a church noted for its adhesive and vivacious vicar, one Simon Aleyn, who was in turns twice a Catholic and twice a Protestant, most conveniently and impartially changing his religious views to suit the troublesome times in which he lived. It is said of him that he chanced to witness some martyrs being burnt at the stake at Windsor, and that he found the fire too hot to suit his temperament, and thereupon he came to the conclusion Nature had never intended him for a martyr. Tradition also asserts that, when upbraided for being a turncoat and inconstant, he replied, 'He was of all men the most constant, and strictly maintained his principle, which was to live and die the Vicar of Bray.'

Presently we reached Maidenhead Bridge, one of Nature's beauty spots. Here we involuntarily pulled up to admire the glorious view. To the right of us were the wooded heights of Cliefden, a very slope of sunny greenery. The scenery had now entirely

changed its character: the flat plains were left behind, the country became hilly, and the hills were well wooded. Trees of all kinds make up the Cliefden Woods, from the light and graceful silver birch to the dark and solemn yew. But to see this spot in perfection it should be viewed in the golden autumn, when Nature is so lavish with her tints; then the woods are one blaze of rich colours. Cliefden House, a comparatively modern building, stands high above the woods on a grassy plateau; the original mansion, a fine structure, was erected by George Villiers, the famous Duke of Buckingham, all traces of which have long since disappeared: it was burnt down. The ancient mansion was of interest on account of the national and well-known air of 'Rule, Britannia,' being composed and first played there before a company, amongst whom Frederick, the then Prince of Wales, was present.

On the slopes hidden by the woods are several caves said to have been the retreat of some noted highwaymen in the olden time; and such is just possible, for the road we were on was, and is now for that matter, the great main road to the West of England, though it cannot now be called the mail or even turnpike road; still, however, the Western mails thunder along within sight of the old way at some six times the speed they used to travel, yet in times past the Quicksilver mail was by no means accounted slow. There is one advantage the traveller of old had over his more speedy modern railway rival: he had time to observe the beauties of the country through which he progressed, with all its

gradual and ever-changing scenery and its varying features and incidents. There is a vast amount of difference between passing through a country and travelling through it. To the tourist of the present day (with notable exceptions of course) rapid transit appears to be of the very essence of his journey; to rush about hither and thither and see as many places as he possibly can appears for the time to be the end and aim of his existence. Such a one always reminds me of Humboldt's friend, of whom he said 'he had gone farther and seen less than anyone he knew.'

It is really a marvel to me how some men will scamper over the Continent as though their lives depended upon the number of places they see. They take hurried glances at the scenery through which they pass; they can hardly be said to observe it; they obtain simply 'hurrygraphs' (yes, that is the word I want) of it. It is astonishing, too, to notice how the active and perspiring Briton will tramp through endless galleries abroad, whilst he seldom if ever visits the treasure stores he has round about him in London.

But to return to our subject. We rested long on that bridge drinking in the beauty and inspiration of the scene. Below us, a shimmering mass of silver quivering in the light, was the tranquil Thames, gliding smoothly on its way; as it appeared to us then, we wondered to ourselves if in all the world there was another river so fair. I have said the Thames was a shimmering mass of silver, but in truth those terms hardly describe it properly; I was stating more

the general impression the river gave us than the strict reality. Looking at it quietly, we presently noticed the glittering mass was made up of many and varying tints. Silvery tones truly predominated everywhere, but for a small space just under the banks it was of a dark brown hue; yonder, in shadow, it was a light transparent raw sienna; but the chief mass was of lighter colouring, consisting of tender greys, brightened here and there with a sparkling as of countless diamonds, where the minute and almost unnoticed ripples caught the sunlight.

Lovely though the prospect was, we could not afford to remain on that one spot too long, for did we not intend to rest at the classic city of Oxford that night? and we had still many miles of pleasant country to traverse before we should reach our destination. We trotted along at a good pace through the long street of Maidenhead, noticing on our way the cosy looking hostelrie of the Bear, where we found such comfortable quarters on a previous journey. We had a stiff hill to mount out of the town, but were well repaid for the climb, as shortly after our arrival on the top we came upon a wide open common, which was swept by a delicious bracing air; the breeze was life-giving and we gloried in it. We pulled up our horses here for a time, that we might enjoy it to the utmost. Here we turned to the right, and left behind us the dusty main road and entered upon a country lane.

I wonder is there anything in the world more beautiful to drive along than an English country lane? I can hardly imagine there can be. In what

a delightfully enticing manner it turns and twists about, revealing at each bend some fresh and unexpected loveliness to charm the eye! And then the glorious but unappreciated hedgerows that are always there to be found in perfection, how beautiful they are! What endless varieties of plants, flowers, and trees go to compose them; how the birds build and sing and rejoice in their tangled recesses! The bramble, with its blossoms of tiny white petals and delicious fruit which children so love to gather, the sweet-scented honeysuckle, the fragrant hawthorn, all snow-white in summer and red with berries in winter, the dog-rose, the sweet briar, besides wild hops, teazles, ground ivy, gorse, privet, and countless other plants, abound in them. And of flowers and grasses to be found, the number is simply legion. Surely there is much to admire in an ordinary English hedge. It must be remembered I have only mentioned but a very few of the wonderful variety of plants, flowers, and shrubs, which, with various kinds of trees, go to make up that most beautiful and thoroughly English feature in the landscape, a common every-day hedgerow.

A country lane and a rural footpath are delightful ways to wander along. I wonder why it is they are so little valued; is it because they are open and free to all? How strange it is that, irrespective of worth, that which is cheapest and easiest obtained is generally in this world the least valued! Perhaps because they cost nothing and we have not to pay to observe them is the reason why we so seldom notice the glorious cloudscapes and sunsets that are,

even in smoky, foggy London, continually to be seen. Or is it that we have not yet learnt the beauty of the common things and sights that we have every day before us? I have known people who could see no especial beauty in a certain—to them—well-known scene or landscape till an artist had interpreted it for them.

Whilst our thoughts were wandering much in this strain, our horses were taking us gaily along, and soon Great Marlow came into sight, the steeple of its modern church looking far better in the distance than it does close to. The outline and proportions of this are good enough, but the details are poor and weak, and are all too suggestive of the modern builder. Good work and good designs should bear close inspection. Still, we could forgive the church and its steeple for the sake of the place. Not that there is any special beauty or picturesqueness about the town, apart from its situation, but its quiet naturalness pleases one.

That tower and church set us thinking about builders and buildings generally. An architect, whilst he has many advantages over an artist, must ever bear in mind he has disadvantages and special difficulties also. It is necessary for him to so design his work that it will look well both at a distance and near to. That this may be the case it is imperatively requisite that proportion should be carefully studied, and detail so applied to construction as to harmonise with the same on closer inspection, not added to it for the sake of ornament. There is, and there should be in all good work, sufficient

construction visible to afford means for ample decorative treatment in the shape of carvings, &c., without adding false additions for that purpose, which additions are inevitably weak and always betray their origin. On personally analyzing the best work of the old builders—and I take it that is the best work the world has yet seen, or possibly ever will see—it appears to me very evident the buildings were planned primarily to suit various special requirements : construction was honestly but not ostentatiously or needlessly everywhere shown and not hidden ; it was then decorated and made a pleasing and a natural feature of. Whether the edifice was a cathedral, an abbey, a church, a mansion, or even a simple cottage, it was all the same, only, of course, the decorations varied, being in keeping with the structure. The result of this was a pleasing and an artistic whole. There was no straining after effect, for it was there already. There were nowhere, so far as I have been able to trace in the old work, any meaningless features introduced for the sake of novelty ; there is an entire freedom from even a suspicion of it. Irregularity, as well as regularity, is certainly to be found, but the former was not employed for its own sake alone, or in any way studied, as is so evident in some of the modern so-called Queen Anne's buildings. No, it came naturally and of necessity ; the love of oddities and eccentricities had not arisen, yet nowhere had the old structures any suspicion of sameness or tameness about them. In fine, the buildings of old were clearly designed for the man, man was not made to

suit the buildings, and honesty of purpose was everywhere apparent.

But enough of this digression. In due course we found ourselves at Great Marlow. Close to the water we noticed a comfortable-looking riverside hotel, but as there were evidently no stables attached to it, and as these were for us a *sine quâ non*, we had to drive up the town to another inn at the further end, where we fared exceedingly and unexpectedly well. Unexpectedly, I have said, for we had the supreme pleasure of having our mid-day meal served to us on the lawn of a delightful old garden, shaded by trees with standard roses and many coloured flowers in beds around. We enjoyed our *al fresco* entertainment all the more because it was so unlooked for. I must, however, say it was we who suggested the proceeding. On arriving at the hotel we were shown into a pleasant low-ceilinged room looking upon a shady garden. This latter so tempted us that we asked if we might have our repast out there beneath the shade of an overhanging tree. Our request was readily granted, though the maid appeared somewhat astonished at it, as did another sojourner resting there, who elected to stay in the comparatively stuffy room. Tastes differ. Who would not prefer, on a bright summer day, a fresh garden to being boxed up in a close room? But I verily believe the individual in question thought our simple request a rather curious one to make. However, we cared not what others thought; we had come into the country to enjoy ourselves and we intended to do so, free for the

time from the trammels and red-tapeism of modern civilization as understood in towns.

It was a warm day, the sun shone steadily and brightly down, the country looked hot; hazy waving lines of heated air rose up quivering from the land. I was going to say it was a regular old-fashioned summer day, but I remembered we have had of late as fine and as hot summers as ever had our forefathers. Owing to the heat we determined to rest our horses here for a while, and start later on in the day when it would be cooler. In the meantime we leisurely strolled down to the river, and, procuring a boat, paddled gently up stream to the shelter of some overhanging trees we noticed on the other side, intending to anchor there and enjoy the peaceful restful scene, listening only to the soothing music the rippling waters made against our bow and watching the countless leaves overhead all transparent in the golden sunshine. But it was not to be—we were surrounded by too much beauty; just a short distance higher up was such a delicious looking nook with many broad-leaved water-lilies sleeping on the surface of the stream, that we were induced to lazily proceed so far. On arriving at this spot we noticed still further ahead an ancient time-worn grey church tower, with great elms around, close to the river, throwing its reflection in the quiet flood below. How could we resist the temptation of a further row to inspect this picturesque old pile? There was a landing there for those who cared or who were obliged to go to church by water—a rather romantic and novel way of church-going it struck us, in these

matter-of-fact days. And then an old mansion attracted our attention further up stream, and so we proceeded by degrees along, delighting in the wonderful and changing beauties all around.

I have said an old mansion attracted us. The said mansion we learnt afterwards was Bisham Abbey; it is a grand old pile, weather-stained and worn, a very picture for an artist's brush. We wondered we had never noticed any representation of it in one of the water-colour galleries. It must surely have figured in some and have escaped our observation; it will hardly do so again. It was a regular old-fashioned rambling building, that spoke in the present plainly of the past, with its diamond leaded panes, quaintly shaped windows, irregular chimney stacks, and old grey tower of ancient date over all. It appeared to us as though it ought to possess by rights a family ghost, one of the genuine old-fashioned sort, that tradition asserts used in those good old times to wander about the gloomy panelled chambers and shadowy dim corridors of haunted houses frightening every one out of their wits, never appearing before midnight and at cock-crow conveniently vanishing away—quite a different article from your modern nineteenth-century impostor who raps at tables in the garish light of day and generally makes himself supremely ridiculous. At any rate, if it could not boast of a ghost, it seemed to us it should have attached to it some weird legend of the long ago. How some places impress you, almost haunt you, whether you will or no! There may be no apparent cause for the fact that one particular old building should thus excite your



ON THE RIVER.

special attention more than another similar one, but so it is ; possibly some old associations half-forgotten may have something to do with the matter. Anyhow, this old pile had a special fascination for us. Here we anchored our boat and began a sketch, which, however, was never finished. The scene was all the most fastidious sketcher could desire, but somehow the place, the time, the hour, and the absolute peace around were not conducive to work. Watching the slowly gliding river had a slumberous influence over us ; and, by the way, it is only such quiet gliding waters you can watch without becoming restless. We simply felt inclined to do nothing, and we did it; the very fact of existing on such a day was happiness supreme. It is not always or everywhere an active mind can find doing nothing a delightful occupation. Such rest for the brain in these days of hurry and bustle is an invaluable tonic, and should always be indulged in when possible.

But time was going by, and we felt we must presently return to our hotel, but we were in no hurry to do so. Why should we hurry ? Time was all our own. Ah! that is one of not the least of the pleasures of our modé of travel, the not being obliged to hasten away from any spot against our inclination. What though the shadows were just beginning to lengthen! It mattered not to us ; we were not accountable to any one for our movements or our time. Starting so late, we should have to make an evening drive of it on to Oxford, where we might or might not arrive before midnight, but we rather rejoiced than otherwise that this was so.

However, all things, good as well as bad, come to an end in this world, and so at last the time came for us to weigh our anchor, or rather the iron grapnel that did duty for the same, and come ashore. As we floated down stream we noticed a punt with three men in it busily fishing—at least they were continually pulling their lines up, but apparently catching nothing. What a pity it is there are nowadays no salmon in this fine river, and that a Thames trout should be such a rarity and a curiosity! As late as 1820, this noble fish had not forsaken this stream, one of seventy-two pounds being captured in that year by one Robert Coxen, a waterman, at Twickenham. Salmon still annually make their appearance at the Thames mouth, and if only they could make their way through the dirty water and filth we throw needlessly into the river, there would be as good sport for anglers west of Twickenham as there is now north of the Tweed. I do not profess great knowledge on matters piscatorial, but the idea has more than once occurred to me, as the Thames and Severn are in direct water communication by canal, whether it would not be possible to re-introduce the lordly salmon by this route. It appears to me at any rate a feasible project, and one worth an experiment. If it proved a failure the loss would not be much, and if a success, the gain would be great.

Arriving at Marlow Bridge, we had a very narrow escape of coming to grief—a steam launch almost ran into us; as it was, the shave was so close that the wash of its screw almost swamped us. Unless carefully steered and run at a moderate speed, these

outcomes of modern civilization are almost as great a nuisance on the river, and as dangerous, as are the traction engines on the common roads. It is a pity that the owners of such craft will not remember to so enjoy themselves as not to interfere with the pleasures of others. Unfortunately, one inconsiderate owner may cause a whole class to come under the ban and malediction of Thames boating-men and fishermen, whom they sadly disturb, even when wishful not to do so.

The mention of this bridge reminds me of rather a good story connected with it. Those who have boated much on the Thames have most probably—in fact they could hardly have escaped hearing at some time or another a query addressed by one bargee to another in chaff, or as a back-handed sort of a compliment, as follows: 'Who ate puppy-pie under Marlow Bridge?' Now for the explanation of how this curious query arose, and the story. Many years ago it came to the knowledge of the landlord of the inn at Medmenham, some few miles further up the river, that some bargemen had planned a raid upon his larder. 'Forewarned is forearmed,' and the landlord prepared for the robbers. But how do you imagine he prepared—by carefully watching his larder or making it additionally secure? Nothing of the sort, he was far too great a genius for that. It so happened that mine host had some puppies that he was going to drown; these he caused to be made into a pie with a tempting crust over all. The bargees duly came and carried off the pie in triumph, and deeming they had arrived at a safe distance,

anchored their craft under Marlow Bridge, and there enjoyed their stolen dainty, believing all the while —deluded mortals!—that they were indulging in rabbit-pie.

On returning to the hotel we ordered the horses to be put to, and, while this was being done, indulged ourselves with tea in the garden. And we were pleased we did, for we chanced to meet there a regular character—some old book-worm or lawyer we judged him to be—who was amusing or resting himself down here fishing. He proved to be a very sociable and entertaining individual, and we had a long and very interesting conversation with him. We only wished we had had more spare time to enjoy his company. He appeared to know the country roundabout well, and we took the opportunity to question him about Bisham Abbey, to discover if, by chance, he might know anything of the place. Did he not! We found we had struck upon a veritable mine of information respecting it; and after all, certainly enough, our intuition was not at fault, for there actually was a ghost story connected with the house, and, moreover, one of the right sort, the history of which and the place ran thus, as related to us, quoting from memory:—It appears the mansion had been originally a priory, and was converted into a residence in the reign of Henry VIII. At one time the house belonged to one Sir Thomas Hoby, who had charge of the Princess Elizabeth, who, under his care, resided here for a considerable period. It is, however, with the wife of the gallant knight that we have to deal,

as far as the ghost is concerned, for she it is who haunts (or is supposed to) the building. It seems she had a son, one Master Thomas Hoby, who was either a very stupid or a very careless boy, or perhaps a little of both; at any rate, he could never write a line in his copy-book without adorning it with sundry blots, which said blots so enraged his mother that in a fit of ill-temper—she was not an over amiable dame at the best of times—she so whipped poor Master Tommy that he shortly afterwards died. And her spirit is said at midnight to wander restlessly about one especial chamber—a white body with black hands and face, making things very disagreeable for any one who would be hardy enough to venture into that particular portion of the house. Considerate and convenient ghost, to keep to one chamber! It is not a little remarkable in connection with this story that in or about the year 1838, whilst some alterations were being made to a window-shutter in the room aforesaid, a copy-book of the period of Elizabeth was found amongst some rubbish behind the woodwork, covered with blots.

Our newly made acquaintance was full of strange anecdotes and histories of places round about; he informed us that we had that day passed by a spot opposite to Cliefden, called Whiteplace, where exists an ancient avenue haunted by the grim ghost of a lady, who solemnly promenades up and down it on dark nights. This ghost is peculiar in being headless, and tradition asserts she is condemned thus to walk the earth for centuries as a punishment for transgressions committed when in the flesh; but

what the particular wickednesses were, we were unfortunately unable to learn, for our horses had already been at the door for some time, impatiently pawing the ground, the light was gradually fading, and it was high time we were off if we were to reach Oxford that day at all. So, reluctantly bidding our friend good-bye, for we regretted exceedingly we could not continue our chat with him, we once more proceeded on our way—not, however, before we thanked him for his interesting anecdotes and legends, which had entertained us not a little.

CHAPTER III.

A Late Start—A Drive in the Dark—A Dilapidated Signpost—A Curious Inscription—Oxford—Architects and Artists—The English Climate—Woodstock—A Comfortable Inn—Country Hostelries—The Tradition of Rosamond's Bower—Rosamond's Tomb—Blenheim Palace—An Ancient Doorway—Sir John Vanbrugh—An Epitaph—Wild England—A Rough Road—Chapel House—The Rollich Stones—Rough Quarters—Old Buildings.

THE sun was setting in a golden glory behind the wooded hills as we left Great Marlow, the trees sent out long bars of shadow across our way; and, as we had a heavy stage over an unknown road and no moon to help or cheer us on our journey, we hurried along so as to make the most of the parting day. How beautiful the country appeared through which we passed at that tranquil hour! Golden lights and pearly grey shadows were everywhere, and a feeling of mystery was all around. Somehow to us it hardly appeared like our every day world, it was a land spiritualized through which we journeyed that evening. The sun's last rays rested lovingly upon the wooded heights ahead, which were a mass of rich warm colouring, contrasting strongly with the cool grey shade into which the valley was thrown. About us the foliage of the tallest elms were all resplendent with golden light, and here and there a gleam of brightness flashed through the gloom, showing where the windows of some house or cot-

tage had caught the glow of the sky above. And oh! the beauty of that sky; the country was all so sombre in tone that there was nothing to distract one's attention from it. There was a mellow amber radiance in the horizon, gradually, imperceptibly almost, fading away into a pale greenish blue above, and across this blue we watched fairy isles of ruby-tinted and gilded clouds sailing northwards away, and from out of which one star trembled in the soft light.

We had hardly made five miles of our stage before the darkness, which had been creeping on slowly but surely the while, overtook us, and with the darkness came a strange solemn silence. By degrees all rural sounds had ceased; the bellowing of distant cattle, the tinkling of far-off sheep bells, the shouting of the labourer returning from his toil, were heard no more. The last load of hay had gone home, the shepherd had left his fold, the birds had sought their nests, and no traveller, belated or otherwise, made his appearance on our lonely way. Lonely, but on that very account enjoyable beyond expression. The world was still—our world, at any rate—and at rest, but the silence was not for long; from out of the fragrant hawthorn hedges presently the nightingale poured forth his unequalled song. We stopped long to listen to his enchanting strain. I wonder would the bird be considered as great a marvel were he to sing in the daylight instead of the witching night time? Certainly the calm evening hour and silence serve to emphasize his notes; there is nothing to distract the listener's attention.

The nightingale has no competitor. There is an indescribable charm in the fierce yet easeful harmony of his singing—the piercing, passionate strains he pours forth, with their long drawn dying cadences, together with a certain plaintiveness and amount of pathos.

Reader, have you ever taken a long drive, say of ten miles or more, through a strange country on a really dark night? If not, you do not know what a difficult feat it is. It is truly a simple enough matter on a known road, and this again is made easier if your horses are accustomed to, or at all acquainted with it. If your way is a familiar one, no matter how dark the night may be, you are all right. Knowing what you have to expect renders your task a comparatively easy one, though care of course is even then necessary. But ours was a very different outlook; all our way before us was absolutely unknown; we had an Egyptian darkness ahead and around, for heavy lowering clouds now obscured the stars, and a halt had to be called in order to light our lamps, which done, we boldly plunged into the mass of grey green darkness, a darkness in which sky, hills, woods, and foreground were blended in one bewildering whole.

I well remember on a similar night, many years ago now, a friend of mine who undertook to drive a party of us home—young fellows returning late from Oxford to a country house some ten miles away—managed somehow, to this day I never could make out how, to land us in a large grass field, and round and round that precious field, bumping about in a ter-

rible manner, lamps out, did we go, endeavouring to find the gap or gate we must have entered by. Eventually this was discovered, and we again proceeded rejoicing on our way, when for a change our driver, who in reality was not a bad whip, but the intense darkness was too much for him, suddenly landed us in a ditch. On the present occasion, not being ambitious to renew our former experience, we proceeded slowly and cautiously along; but we soon found out that, though slowness and caution were very good things in their way, still if we did not make a little more speed Oxford would not see us before the dawn of day. Driving fast on a fresh road, when one could not see half-a-dozen yards ahead, was perhaps hardly conducive to safety; but a certain amount of risk had to be run, unless we wished to be out on the road all night. So, taking the horses well in hand, and making use of the horn from time to time, we dashed along at a good pace; so difficult and deceptive was the light, or rather absence of light, that we could only tell by the lamps, showing whether the traces were tight or slack, if we were descending hills or otherwise. Once we nearly ran into a bank of stones, which, appearing light against a dark mass of foliage, we took to be a turn of the road, and almost directly afterwards a gig on the wrong side of the way without lamps all but collided with us. After passing through a village, the warm gleaming lights of which were most welcome and appeared very cheery in contrast to the gloom we had left, we began to mount and apparently reached high and open ground, and for

a wonder we could trace our road, a suspicion of lighter grey just telling out of the surrounding sombreness, some little way in front. Here we put on steam and trotted along at a rattling pace, when, suddenly rising up spectrally before us, we half saw, half felt, an old dilapidated signpost; this was of no service, however, for on pulling up and examining it by the aid of our lamps we found two of the three arms were gone, and the remaining one was illegible! But if it was of no use to direct us on our way, at least it set us thinking, and a horrible idea would suggest itself, that after all we might possibly be travelling in a wrong direction, as it would by no means have been a difficult matter to have taken a false turning, and we almost wished we had not been too proud or too hurried to have asked if we were 'all right' at the village we had last passed through. A long stop was made on this lonely, desolate spot, and our maps and guide-books were got out and carefully consulted. The consultation was not a very satisfactory one, as our map appeared rather hazy at that particular locality, and only showed two out of the three roads. However, it was very evident our way was either straight on or to the right; it was a serious matter to decide which. Eventually, after another careful examination of our chart, we concluded to steer an even course straight forward. So the word was given, and we found ourselves once again rumbling and jolting over a not too even road. The mention of this signpost reminds me of a most extraordinary one we came across some years ago in one of the southern coun-

ties, bearing the following strange inscription:—'This is a bridle path to Faversham; if you can't read this, you had better keep to main road.' This was evidently erected before the era of School Boards.

High up as we were, the air was bracing and cool, not to say chilly, but, donning our ulsters, we drove merrily along, although in a happy state of uncertainty as to whether we were speeding on to our wished-for destination or whether our road would lead us elsewhere. But after all, we reasoned, what signified it? we supposed eventually we should arrive somewhere. Roads generally do lead to inhabited places, in England.

With all its uncertainties and mild excitements, it was a most delightful and enjoyable drive. How musically the horn sounded on the stilly air as we entered a dark wood or turned a sudden corner! what a weird light the lamps cast around, only making the darkness more visible! But after all they were better than nothing; at least, by their aid we managed to keep on the road, and that was something. How strangely too, and distinctly, sounded the steady tramp! tramp! of the horses, the crunching noise of the wheels over the gravel road, and the measured rattling of the pole chains! What a clatter and din we made as we dashed through the sleepy villages, with here and there a stray light in the upper windows of their cottages! For sheer fun we would give a loud blast on the horn as we passed through them, much, doubtless, to the astonishment of their quiet and peaceful inhabitants.

Late, very late, agreeably tired, and exceedingly jolly, we arrived at Oxford, and found, in spite of the unseasonable hour, comfortable quarters and a welcome at the Randolph Hotel, one of the few modern hostelries, the number of which could be counted on our fingers, that we can praise without reserve. Oxford is one of the most beautiful and delightful cities to visit anywhere to be found; I do not say to reside in, for that is a very different matter. There are many reasons why a city which is an agreeable one in which to make a short stay may be the reverse for a long occupation. Some of these in Oxford are patent; and besides, whatever the advantages and beauties of the city may be, it has one unfortunate drawback, and one that cannot, alas! be overcome is its situation: it lies low, and is surrounded by level meadows which are often under water. However, we bothered our heads very little about its situation or its salubrity. We spent a most delightful morning wandering over and amongst the grand old colleges, with their many treasures of carved oak and stained glass and pictures, and, above all, admiring their wealth of weather-stained stonework, their quaintly-shaped gabled roofs, their mullioned windows of warm grey and often crumbling stone. These, together with the fresh green of lawns and trees in close conjunction, form a striking and effective whole. The stone of which many, if not all, the colleges are built is of a somewhat fragile sort, and this has weathered quickly; thus the buildings have a look of greater age than is actually theirs. It is a pity

that a more durable material was not originally employed.

We did not resume our journey till late in the afternoon, and then only took a short stage of eight miles on to Woodstock, in order to give our horses a little rest after the hard work of the day, or rather night, before. We had a lovely afternoon for our drive, an afternoon of soft airs and mellow sunshine, with a deep blue sky and rolling clouds overhead. Such days, though somewhat scarce, are after all not quite such rare occurrences as people think who always appear to imagine that the poor and much-abused English climate is the very worst possible, or nearly so, in the world. Has not Charles II. said it was only in England one was enabled to join in outdoor sports all the year round, the weather never being too hot nor too cold for an average healthy mortal to exercise and enjoy himself in the open? Nathaniel Hawthorne, who never praised anything English without just reason, said, 'For all in all it was the best climate in the world.' An American gentleman, Mr. Andrew Carnegie, who drove from Brighton to Inverness, crossing the Atlantic for the special purpose, speaks highly in praise of it; and several other strangers have written and spoken of its good qualities. Is not this a little singular? Surely it cannot be such a bad climate as we imagine? True, there are certain times in the year when it is by no means everything one could desire, indeed, very much the reverse; but is there anywhere in the world to be found a perfect all-round climate? If so, I have failed to discover the spot. I have been

to California—the land of the sun—it certainly is not there; nor is it in the American hemisphere, north or south; and in Europe I have not been able to find it. You can even leave, if you wish, Ventnor, Torquay, or Bournemouth in the winter, and proceed to the Riviera in search of sunshine, and it may chance you will find, as others have before you, that you have not much bettered yourself; but then the Riviera is abroad, and that is everything!

We had a pleasant drive, and did not arrive in the picturesque and once royal town of Woodstock till nearly sunset; the country was too beautiful to hurry through, and the day was not one of those that make you wish to hasten along. We passed one or two pleasantly-situated homes on our way, looking very peaceful and restful.

At Woodstock we pulled up at the Bear, which, after a drive round on a tour of inspection of the various hostelries in the place, we judged to be the best. There was a show of plants and flowers about the house, and from long experience of road-work we have always found these to be a good sign; and so we drove confidentially into the ample courtyard of the inn, and handed our steeds over to the care of the ostler. The landlady—a comely, cheery sort of body—came to welcome us, and made us feel at once quite at home, and we knew somehow instinctively our lot had fallen into good quarters. Many an old-world hostel of this sort has it been our good fortune during our journeys in various parts of the country to come across. One especially rises up now before me—a long, low, rambling, two-storied, ivy-covered

building, with grey stone mullioned windows, and a hospitable-looking porch covered with fragrant honeysuckle that speaks as it were a welcome. It is a building such as an artist would have designed—it is both a poem and a picture, with its high-pitched gables, its red-tiled, lichen-laden roof, its wreathing, ample chimneys, its irregular sky-line, and general old-world look and flavour. A glamour of romance seems inseparable from such places. It is an hostelrie Chaucer's pilgrims might well have rested at—a building hoary with age, and full of past memories. How delightfully and lovingly one can look upon and enjoy such a gem of old-time work! When will the modern builder learn to do the like? Perhaps I may state, for the curiosity of my readers, that this said hostelrie is within twenty-five miles of London, though from the appearance of the place and its surroundings it might as well be a hundred; we came across it on our wanderings one day, and a more pleasant surprise than coming, suddenly and totally unprepared for anything of the sort, upon that charming old building, we have hardly ever experienced. But I must say no more—perchance I have said too much already; I would not have the place become known and spoilt for worlds. The very nearness to town makes me tremble for its fate.

Woodstock was once a royal town, the manor house of that name being pulled down when the magnificent palace of Blenheim was built and given by a grateful nation to John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough, together with the fine park

and a valuable and an extensive grant of land, since which time the memory of the manor as a regal residence seems to have been forgotten, although this estate had previously belonged uninterruptedly to the kings of England for over eight hundred years. Alfred the Great had his palace here, and it was a favourite residence of Henry I., who hunted in the park, as likewise did Henry III. Edward the Black Prince was born in the old mansion, and in it the Princess Elizabeth was kept prisoner by her sister. It is said that when here, one day whilst gazing abstractedly out of her barred casement window, she noticed a milkmaid passing and singing some ditty. All at once envious tears came into the Princess's eyes, and she longed for the free and happy life of the country maiden.

But perhaps Woodstock is more famous for the tradition of Fair Rosamond's bower than anything else. Regarding the fate of Fair Rosamond, it will be seen that the ordinarily accepted tradition is at fault, for it is pretty certain and clear from local history that at once, upon the Queen's discovery, the girl was sent into the safe keeping of a convent. In the convent she died, and the King ordered her to be buried before the high altar of the chapel connected with it, and caused a handsome monument to be erected to her memory, with the following inscription:—

> Hic jacet in tumba Rosa Mundi non Rosa Munda,
> Non redolet sed olet quæ redolere solet.

An epitaph not to be translated into English without spoiling the play on words which the reader cannot

fail to observe. Respecting the tradition of the bower, it appears from an old work that a traveller in the year 1636 visiting this spot remarked upon the ruins of it, consisting, as he described them, of 'many strong walls of rough masonry, some arched over, with numerous strange winding ways and turnings.' So that after all there is possibly some foundation of truth for the legend to rest upon.

In the morning, before we started upon our day's pilgrimage, we strolled along to see the park and the exterior of the palace—we had no wish nor inclination to see the interior, so did not visit it—just for the sake of saying we had been there. Besides, if we had taken the time to inspect everything of interest we came across on our journey, I hardly know when it would have been finished; we should probably not have arrived in Scotland till the snow had mantled her mountains and peaks. One man's rest may be in reading books, another's in climbing mountains, or taking pedestrian tours; or, if a very wise individual, in driving about country like ourselves, which latter can be made to combine a good many things; but an endless rushing about in a vain struggle to see everything or as much as possible, is no rest whatever, it is simply hard work for brain and body.

On our way to the park we noticed an ancient church, built possibly when Woodstock town was only a village, not that it is a large place even now —quite the opposite. The church is a curious and not over harmonious conglomeration of various styles and periods of architecture; one portion of

it is, however, well worth seeing, and that is a fine old Norman doorway, with its characteristic zigzag mouldings. I trust it is still there. When we paid our visit, the restorer apparently (we might possibly have been mistaken) was about to commence operations, and scaffolding was being erected perilously near the door. Blenheim Park is very fine, beautifully timbered, and with a pleasant contrast of stilly water and waving woodlands. From it we had a comprehensive view of the palace. Of the grandeur of the situation of this there can be no doubt; but as for the merits of the building, they are not beyond criticism. It struck us as being a massive, dull, heavy, pretentious (a good many adjectives, but I require them all) looking erection, gloomy enough for a workhouse, and ugly enough for barracks. Sir John Vanbrugh was the architect, of whom it was said his epitaph should be written thus :—

> Lie heavy upon him, O Earth, for he
> Hath laid many a heavy weight on thee !

We always thought that the writer of the above had done the famous architect an injustice, but after seeing the pile of stone known by the name of the Palace of Blenheim we quite agreed with the epitaph.

Woodstock is a pleasant little town, a place to stroll about in (there is nothing else to do), and yet not be altogether dull. But we did not do much loafing; the weather was so fine and deliciously cool, it tempted us to proceed, for it might not thus always smile upon us; and besides, beautiful though the southern scenery was, with a rare beauty all its own,

still we were impatient to get north amongst the heather-clad hills and far-stretching moors, where one can wander knee-deep in bracken, and where Nature disports herself in her wildest, most careless, and freest moods. So we ordered the phaeton round at once on returning from our stroll, and soon we were again merrily bowling along our way, the horses being somewhat fresh after their easy stage of yesterday.

Our road began well; pleasing rural scenery was the order of the day, and level running—'pushing-ground,' as such was significantly called in the old coaching days. It was upon similar favourable stretches that the mails in the olden times, before the iron horse usurped their place, made up for lost time when necessary, and generally, owing to the extra speed, it was upon such portions of the way accidents mostly occurred, not on the hilly stages, as one might naturally suppose. It was the speed that did the mischief; the pace made on favourable 'pushing-ground' when the mail was late was sometimes terrific (for horseflesh, of course). Often, more often than otherwise, the 'coachee' indulged in a full gallop; then if a horse stumbled or anything went wrong, if the coach locked, &c., there was 'a case,' as an accident was termed. With a careful driver, good cattle, and a well-built drag, this seldom happened; but all drivers were not careful. Sometimes a gentleman got hold of the ribbons, or a strange horse went wrong, or the coach was top-heavy, or a wheel gave way, and then—well, then an accident took place, the list

of casualties of which, if the mail was travelling loaded, would not disgrace a modern railway smash.

We made the best of our good bit of road, as we did not know what might be in store for us ahead; a road that begins well often ends badly, and *vice versâ*—that is to say, it often becomes hilly and rough. So in the present case, as we almost feared, our even way was too good to last, and not only did it become hilly but the surface changed for the worse, being uneven and very bad and jolty for fast driving, or, indeed, slow for that matter. Rocks actually peeped up through the macadam. The badness of the road may be accounted for by the fact that there are not many travellers this way; we, at any rate, only met one the whole of our day's drive of some twenty miles, and this in the centre of populous England!

Away from railways thus—for we were as far from the iron roads as it is about possible to be in this year of grace, when the whole land is gridironed all over with them—it is astonishing how much solitary and alone you can be. I have, in fact, on some of our moors, downs, and wolds, experienced a feeling of loneliness and desolation, as much or more than I have in the primeval forests of California or the wild prairies of the Far West. If any tourist, therefore, wants to be severely let alone, he need not leave England for that object, it can be perfectly well obtained at home. Amongst the mountain-lands of Scotland, Wales, the Lake District, or Yorkshire, even in the tourist-haunted portions, it is quite an easy feat to get away into lonely up-

lands and secluded spots, where neither human beings, their habitations, nor their works are to be seen. Even within fifty miles of London you may wander all day long about the South Downs without meeting more than a stray shepherd or so; and further afield, take Bettws-y-Coed for instance, I know a dozen walks or more from that crowded tourist centre, of not over three or four miles in extent, leading to spots where you can roam about in a solitude with nothing of life to be seen save perchance a passing bird or two, and where you will only have the distant mountain peaks for company.

Though our road turned out a rough one, we were more than compensated for it by the scenery as, gradually improving as our way deteriorated, up and down we went. It seemed to us a good deal more up than down, but that was probably our imagination. We passed several parks with bright green pastures, beautifully wooded, some with fine old timber, about and around which latter flocks of rooks kept caw-caw-cawing in a pleasing yet half mournful monotony. There are some sounds that have a special charm, or perhaps I should more correctly say a fascination for me. The solemn caw-caw-caw of rooks is one, and the weird, plaintive cry of the seagull is another; but, above all, what impresses me most is the mournful wail, the uncanny, mysterious sounds of a hurrying wind through a pine forest.

We presently came to the picturesque little village or hamlet of Chapel House, with its pretty green, in which grows a remarkably fine old elm.

Here we noticed a large cheerful looking inn, or rather, what had once been one, for on our nearer approach we discovered the extensive building had been converted into a number of cottages. These, on close inspection, had a strange look, possessing, as each one did, a large handsome stone window. —Fortunate cottagers, you seldom have such a luxury! Evidently in the olden times this had been a prosperous and a noted wayside hostelrie, probably a great posting house. Near this spot is a Druidical circle (called the Rollich Stones), and well worth a visit. It appears to be but little known, except locally—at least, we had never heard of it before, for this is not a tourist district; there is not even a railway near, and guide-books of it are still to be written, and may they unwritten long remain to the advantage of the general traveller. There is a great pleasure in coming thus unexpectedly and naturally, as it were, upon scenes and relics of the past, and not to have them walled in and be charged so much a head to see them just like a peep-show. Besides, one appreciates natural beauties, &c., all the better for not being posted up beforehand all about them. There is a great pleasure in the surprise, and a certain innocent delight, in a discovery of this kind: a Columbus-like sort of feeling, be it in ever so mild a way. The stones of which this circle consists, or rather consisted, used to be sixty in number within the recollection of the oldest inhabitant, but some have fallen down, and some, in the dark ages, were removed for building purposes, so that now there is

only about a third of the original number left. At some distance from the circle—at about a hundred yards at a rough guess, stands all alone a solitary monolith. It appears that all these stones were quarried near the spot, judging from their kind, and in this respect they differ from those of Stonehenge, which are of different sorts, and many of which must have been brought from afar off, some even a hundred miles or more.

Shortly after leaving Chapel House we had a stiff climb up a long hill, the top of which was fir crowned, and told out a dark indigo green uneven mass against the light sky. On reaching the summit we looked down upon a little village sleeping peacefully, very peacefully, at the foot of a long descent. 'Distance lends enchantment to the view;' and it did in the present case, not that the village was actually an ugly place, but from our first far-off view of it, it appeared a delightfully picturesque hamlet; the picturesqueness, however, almost entirely if not quite vanished on arriving at it.

Here we found a small hotel—at least the proprietor called it so; it appeared to us a kind of a cross between a second-rate country inn and a public-house, a little too poor for the first and yet superior to the latter. We pulled up in the main street of the village and held a council of war to decide whether we should stop here and make the best of it, or chance coming across better quarters farther on, or whether we should do neither, but camp out; we were quite prepared to do the latter if necessary, as we carried supplies with us both for our

horses and ourselves, in case of such an emergency. In the boot was a feed of oats and beans mixed just sufficient for each horse, and for ourselves we had the handiest of spirit lamps, and either coffee or tea was easily made; but, enjoyable though our camps out on the roadside were, we never cared to fall back on our reserves unless compelled to do so, and we also took the precaution to renew from time to time our stores (when requisite) at the various towns we passed through. In crossing over wild mountain districts and traversing lonely moorlands, where inns of any kind are few and far between, to be able to draw up by the way, and indulge in an *al fresco* meal, is a pleasurable necessity. The council of war did not last long; we decided to stay where we were; the country around had a bare look in the direction we were journeying towards, and we very reasonably argued we might go farther and fare worse, or not fare at all. So the horses were unharnessed (the whole of the inhabitants of the place, young and old, looking on at the wonderful performance) and led to the cow-shed, which did the double duty of a stable for the 'hotel' by day and a cattle stall by night. It was not over-clean, by the way, but, however, some very fair corn was procured, and in spite of all drawbacks the horses cleared their mangers. For ourselves, we were ushered into a very small sitting-room with an exceedingly low roof, in which there was about space for a moderate-sized table and four chairs. Here we deemed it safest to order some tea and eggs; in fact, I doubt if we could have

had anything else, even had we so desired. At any rate, in the most out-of-the-way places, such a simple repast can always be had fairly good. Passable tea, wholesome bread and butter, and freshly laid eggs, do not form such a despicable meal after all. Our simple repast over, we did not care to remain in the tiny room, especially as the one window it contained was only designed to admit light and not air, the supply of which latter we had about exhausted, so we took a stroll round the village. We wondered much if since the last coach passed through here any stranger had passed this way, or else why were we in this particular village the cause of so much curiosity. There was nothing out of the way in our appearances, and we did not see why because we arrived in a phaëton we should on that account be watched wherever we went as though we were a couple of negro minstrels or a Punch-and-Judy show; but so it was, and I can only hope the natives were duly edified. We noticed two large blocks of buildings in the place which had evidently in the days of yore been prosperous hotels; now portions of them are converted into cottages, the other portions were going to decay. One of the buildings had a handsome old carved stone doorway, and the windows in it were very fine. We judged from the size of the stables, which were extensive as well as ruinous, that seventy or more horses must have been kept at each of these fine hostelries. What a contrast from the bustle and life of those past days to the present ones of desolation and decay!

CHAPTER IV.

Scotch Firs—The old-fashioned Flail in use—A Picturesque Village—Market Crosses—A Homelike Country—An Old Farmhouse—A Sleepy Town—A Hunt for Quarters—Accommodated at Last—A Forsaken Hotel—A Stupid Ostler—Deserted Stables—A Chat with our Landlord—A Bad Outlook—A History of Chapel House—Dr. Johnson's Opinion of Taverns—Old English Hostels—Our Bedroom—A Tour of Discovery—Antique Rooms—The Writing on the Glass.

AFTER leaving the village our road turned out hilly, not that the hills were severe, but there were so many of them that a little level ground would have been an agreeable change. At the crest of one of the rises we came upon a solitary and romantic clump of Scotch firs (what an individuality and character these trees possess! A few of them form quite a telling feature in a landscape). One of these was carefully enclosed with railings; the why and wherefore of this we could not make out, as there appeared to be nothing peculiar or remarkable about that especial tree. Probably some history was attached to it, some old-world legend or tradition, or it would hardly be thus so carefully protected. As the clump was situated on a lovely spot with a wild country round about, we conjured to ourselves pictures of highwaymen of the olden days, and thought that possibly they might have had some connection with this place.

Gradually now the land became more fertile and cultivated, and assumed a cheerful, inhabited look, which was very pleasing to the eye; by degrees, cosy-looking farmhouses and irregular old gabled barns made their appearance, surrounded by trees as ancient as themselves. Within one of these barns we actually both saw and heard the old-fashioned flail for threshing in use. We had imagined that machinery had quite done away with this primitive instrument, but it appears such is not the case—in these parts, at any rate.

From the barn in question we had a long ascent of over two miles, and a like descent; at the end of which we came upon as picturesque a little village, both in itself and its surroundings, as is anywhere to be found in England, or out of it for that matter; and here we noticed a delightful old inn, covered all over with ivy and various creepers, and looking most inviting. We only regretted on seeing it we had not taken our chance of the road instead of baiting at Enstone. It was vexing certainly, as it does not always fall to the lot of a wearied traveller to find such a resting-place. It is, however, very easy to be wise when you know everything; and so we reasoned to ourselves that, as it was impossible for us to have been aware of the existence of this hostelrie, under the circumstances we acted wisely in accepting a certainty for an uncertainty. The village that so pleased us we found was called Long Compton. In its one street there are the steps remaining that once evidently supported a market-cross in those pre-Reformation times when most rural towns and many

hamlets had one or more of these symbols of Christianity erected. Few, however, perfect ones now remain; they were, long ago, nearly all thrown down and ruthlessly destroyed by the stern Puritans, to whom anything in the form of a cross was as a red rag to a mad bull. Though the crosses were removed, the steps, as in this case, were generally left intact. They are now, as a rule, a good deal worn and weathered by the exposure to the storms of many years; and very often they form a playground for the village children and others, whose exploits upon them do not tend to their preservation. Now and again, we have found in the course of our wanderings, the steps have been repaired and a fresh cross in the olden style has been re-erected. The picturesque effect of these structures is often very great, and they generally form a pleasing feature in the 'townscape,' if I may be allowed to coin a special word to tersely express my meaning.

It appears from an old work which I discovered amongst a quantity of ancient books at one of our hotels one evening, and amused myself by reading, that at the time when the monasteries were in their glory in the land almost every market town in England, besides numerous villages, possessed a cross, some of which were 'exceedingly rich and elaborate in their architectural details.' Alas! that so many works of art should thus have been destroyed in a fit of so-called religious zeal.

A propos of the destructive instincts of the English workman, I was considerably amused at an architect's remark to me one day. It happened that I

was having a mosaic pavement laid down in my hall, upon which some Italians were engaged. On noticing that foreigners were employed, he said, 'Englishmen would be of no good for this job, they have not sufficient patience; but if you wished for it to be torn up, you could not employ better men.'

After leaving Long Compton we had again a deal of collar work, and at the top of the first hill we rested our horses for a few minutes, and took the opportunity of turning our gaze backwards in the direction we had come from; it is as well to reverse your view from time to time as you are driving, as it affords you often a completely fresh and unexpected prospect. Turning round, we noticed Long Compton almost enveloped in the foliage of apple and other trees; a sweet-looking, happy, peaceful hamlet, speaking of repose. How quietly the blue smoke curled up from the humble cottages; how solemnly appeared the old grey church, just showing amongst a mass of sombre greenery, the dark shade of yew trees being plainly observable! Overhead a clear blue sky; around, motionless woodlands; it was a scene of perfect peace, adown which the sun shone in a mellow golden sheen. Surely no dull care or worry could penetrate into this secluded calm spot, enclosed by hills from the noise and strife of the outer world!

As we proceeded on our way the country became each mile, if possible, more beautiful. Everything around us was suggestive of human occupancy: the soil was well tilled, the trees were carefully shrouded, cattle stood lazily looking at us over the gates, sheep



A MILL BY THE WAY.

were in their folds busily feeding, men and women were in the fields tossing the hay; above us the lark was singing his loudest, his most entrancing song, and all about was joyous life; and from afar we heard the rattle, rattle, of a mowing machine—a sound becoming common now in the country; and on the soft summer's air came wafted to us various sweet odours of the honeysuckle, the sweetbriar, the lime, and countless other wild and unseen flowers and shrubs; but above all the most frequent and the most delightful was the unequalled fragrance of the new-mown hay. It was a scene thoroughly, intensely English, and to us at least exceedingly attractive—a scene I have said; I should more correctly state a succession of scenes, and each one in its way a perfect picture of mellow home like beauty—beauty of a sort no other country can show.

At one spot we actually pulled up our horses and rested several minutes, to see what? simply an old farm-house and accompanying out-buildings surrounded by stately elms. Not much, you may say, and not worth the trouble of stopping for. But that is a matter of opinion. That special homestead had a special attraction for us; it was a picture in stone, a bit of poetry of ordinary every-day life. Possibly the inhabitants of the place thought not much of it, and wondered at our long halt. But let me give the scene, though I should require a painter's brush as well as a pen to do it properly. Before us was a low, rambling two-storied building showing the weather tinting of years, with outhouses in harmony, their roofs all lichen and

moss covered, and of such rich colouring that the brightest pigments of my paint-box failed to represent them as they were. Quaint stacks of chimneys, curiously shaped old leaded windows, and many gabled ends and corners, showed here and there from out of the wealth of foliage the house was surrounded with, and above and over all there was an indescribable but a very real suggestion of home comfort. This rural home was half revealed and half hidden from our envious eyes by overshadowing elms. True, the day and hour were perfect; the sun, now low down, sent delicious slanting rays across the old homestead, causing portions of it to stand out in high and warm relief, and others to be half lost in uncertain mysterious shade; but that was not all—the hour simply helped the effect, it did not make it. There is no doubt that in the early morning and the late noon the low light much enhances the effect of even the finest scenery: those are therefore the hours in which the landscape artist should be most busy.

So long and often had we loitered on our way, that it was getting late when we arrived at the end of our day's stage, and the sun was setting in the west amidst a glory of crimson and gold, giving us promise of a fine day for the morrow. Our stopping place for the night was a sleepy old town, and looked as though it had been asleep for years, and would sleep on for all time. It was possibly the largest and most important town in England without a railway; not that it was either a large or an important place, but somehow railway directors and engineers toge-

ther have, to the discomfiture of shareholders and reduction of their dividends, found out almost every small town or insignificant village to which by any possible excuse they could make a railway—and have made one. This one, however, seems to have been strangely missed by them.

Slumbering though this town appeared to us, it was not always thus; situated on the old turnpike road to the North (a busy road), much traffic must in old times have passed through it; and from what we could make out from their present outside condition, it must have boasted in those days of two large and important hotels, besides possibly other minor ones. Then day and night the streets of the place must have been alive with travellers coming and going, and coaches arriving and departing. Now our phaeton rattled along in solitary glory, but not silently, for somehow, as in an empty room or house, so in a half-forsaken town, sounds seem to re-echo in a strange way; and the clatter, clatter, of our horses' feet and the crunching of our wheels on the ground seemed to us to resound in a mysterious unnatural manner from the surrounding buildings; so much so, indeed, that we found ourselves involuntarily slackening our pace. We drove quietly round the town, and prospected the two ancient hotels, neither of which looked very promising or inviting; both showed evident signs of past prosperity, but had evidently sadly fallen from their original high estate. We drew up at the one we considered the most flourishing; we hardly knew which to choose, as the house of one and the stables of the other

seemed the best; eventually we were selfish and selected the best house. Alas for selfishness! On observing us the landlord came out, one quite in keeping with the hotel. We at once asked for rooms; he appeared quite nonplussed at our modest request, and dived indoors to ask the 'missus.' This did not look promising; however, we waited patiently outside, during which time we noticed an animated discussion going on inside. Presently the landlord reappeared, and said 'they were very sorry, but they could not possibly accommodate us, as they had no spare room'—we presumed he meant a furnished one, for from the size of the old building we imagined vacant rooms were plentiful—and moreover, he stated in a half apologizing manner as his reason for not being able to receive us, 'Since they had had the hotel, no traveller had ever asked to stay the night there.' A lively sort of place this, we muttered to ourselves—not exactly the spot we should choose to start a hotel in were we to take to innkeeping. There was nothing for it but to drive to the other hostelrie and try our fortune there, and if that failed us we supposed we should have to make the best of it, by giving our horses what rest we could and taking another night stage. But as the country did not appear very inhabited round about, and as our horses had had already a long and a heavy day's work, we did not much relish the idea of so doing, if by any possibility we could procure quarters of any kind in the town. We therefore drove up to the other hotel, which, truth to say, looked just a little too dilapidated to please us; however, evidently

it was that one or none, so we ventured to ring the bell. We could hear it echoing in a melancholy manner in the large gloomy and half-deserted pile. In due course the landlord came forth (landladies seemed to be non-existent in this part of the world). 'Could we have a room for the night and could our horses be accommodated?' we inquired. 'Oh, certainly.' We were almost surprised at the reply—we had hardly expected a favourable one after our former experience. The place indeed had a deserted wobegone look, which was not a little depressing, especially at that late hour. We were, however, ushered into a small but tolerably furnished sitting-room.

We next hinted we should like to see our bedroom, as we were by no means so far predisposed with the place from what we had already seen as to care to make arrangements to spend the night there without getting some idea as to what the room would be like. We were shown up what had once been a fine and ample staircase, and indeed it was so still, but looked bare now, being all guiltless of carpet, the landlord still doing the host; in fact, we never saw anyone in the house besides himself and a maid-of-all-work; we presumed—we doubted if the establishment consisted of more than these two. We inspected our room, and at last agreed that it would do, so elected to stay there the night. Some of the ceiling in the room was down, showing the rafters, and the paper was off in places, and had been replaced with that of another pattern. The furniture was of antique date, but, to be just, though

poverty was everywhere apparent, everything was clean. There was a piece of carpet laid on the bare boards, but the boards themselves were well scrubbed and sweet, so were the passages. Evidently the best had been done with the place as far as the landlord's means allowed, and we quite pitied his lot, my wife expending quite a quantity of sympathy upon him.

Ordering tea, we noticed the one servant rush out to procure the chops, eggs, and milk required for the repast, and saw her duly return laden with the same. The girl certainly made the best of the place, and seemed attached to her master, which, under the circumstances, spoke well for her and for him. We now deemed it advisable to inspect the stables. These were a depressing sight; nearly all were vacant and going to decay—the home of gigantic cobwebs, and endless rubbish, and stray half-starved mice, all of which, mice excepted, had doubtless been accumulating since the last coach took its last stage here. However, two stalls in the further end of the long row appeared in better repair, and gave signs of being occasionally used. They were, besides, weatherproof and dry, and in these our horses were quartered. The oats were fair, and there was a sufficiency of straw, so we felt at rest and satisfied in this respect. Our man, too, actually had an ostler to help him—not that he was of much or any use, but he pretended to be; he was a dull, clumsy boy, presumably employed to do odd jobs about the inn yard, and knew about as much how to groom horses as a monk of love-

making, or a modern speculative builder of good, honest work. As he could be of no service to assist in grooming, and was not to be trusted to wash the carriage alone, our man asked him just to wipe over the harness for him, thinking he was competent, at any rate, to do that. But the boy, anxious to do something more, and to show he knew what he was about, essayed to clean the brass furniture of the same (*i.e.* the buckles, crests, rings, hames, &c.), to do which the bright youth employed a blacking-brush and a liberal supply of blacking. This was not discovered in the dark, and it was only noticed just before our early start next day, so we had to resume our journey half in mourning, and our man had an enjoyable extra hour's work or so that evening removing the black paste which had penetrated everywhere, during which time he doubtless muttered the reverse of blessings upon the head of the too assiduous ostler.

On returning to our little sitting-room things looked considerably brighter. A capital tea was spread, lighted candles were on the table, and a cheery fire was blazing away right merrily in the high antique grate, for the room was not too warm, even on that fine summer evening. The walls of the house were thick, and the place had, when we first entered, a chilly look, but the ruddy firelight made us feel quite comfortable and at home. What a deal a fire will do! No wonder an Englishman loves his own fireside. And after all we spent a very pleasant and cosy evening in that little room. Tea finished, I went out in search of our worthy

landlord, to see if I could manage to extract from him any history or tradition of the place or the surroundings. I found that important individual in the bar, which was dimly lighted by a solitary paraffin lamp. He had two customers chatting with him, each indulging in a glass of ale. This looked like business of some sort, I thought, albeit not of a very profitable nature. Presently the two individuals decamped, and I had the landlord all to myself, not only for the time being, but for the whole evening. I opened the ball, and then held my tongue, except now and again to keep mine host from wandering too much, for I discovered he was of a chatty and a communicative nature, and I had only to lead him along to hear all I required, or, at least, all on those topics he had to tell me. His remarks did not begin very promisingly; he stated the two men just departed (present company, of course, excepted, and we were very exceptional) were the only customers he had had that day. He had given up farming as an unprofitable occupation, and had been induced to come forth as a full-fledged hotel-keeper, without any training. experience, or special aptitude in that line. He had been tempted to take this hotel, which had been empty for some time, because the rent was very low, as well it might be; indeed, we thought it would be dear at nothing, with the whole of the long rambling house to keep in repair. This we considered a great mistake on his part. He complained now that hotel-keeping was even more unprofitable than farming, and we agreed with him—at least, that his hotel-keeping

was. If not a very practical or a good man of business, we found our host on other subjects well informed—indeed, unexpectedly so, at least upon all local matters and places, for he appeared not to care much for the concerns of the world beyond his own county and its immediate surroundings. How such a person could vegetate in such a place was to us a marvel; but then the world is full of strange facts, and if one only began to wonder at the various actions of the people in it—why, there would be no end to the wondering.

One thing of more than local interest we learnt in the course of our long conversation that night, and it is worth recording here. It appears that the old inn at Chapel House, which, kind reader, you will remember we remarked upon as we passed as being a fine old stone structure, evidently in times past of some importance, received as a guest on one occasion no less a personage than Dr. Johnson, and it was in and of that hotel in particular he made his famous remarks, or rather discourse, anent taverns, which said remarks have now become historical, but will bear repeating. This, then, is what that old English worthy said: 'There is no private house in which people can enjoy themselves as well as at a capital tavern like this' (he was addressing Boswell, who was staying with him there). 'Let there be ever so great a plenty of good things, ever so much grandeur, ever so much elegance, ever so much desire that every guest should be easy, in the nature of things it cannot be; there must always be some degree of care and anxiety. The master of the

house is anxious to entertain his friends; these in their turn are anxious to be agreeable to him, and no one but a very impudent dog can as freely command what is in another man's house as if it were his own. Whereas, at a tavern there is a general freedom from anxiety. You are sure you are welcome; and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are. No servants will attend you with the alacrity which waiters do, who are incited by the prospect of an immediate reward in proportion as they please. No, sir, there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn.' This hostelrie seems to have been famous on the road for its good cheer, hospitality, wines, &c., to which, perhaps, I may add jovial company, and doubtless in its day here was entertained many a noble guest and important personage. In Dr. Johnson's time and afterwards until the iron horse took the place of the one of flesh and blood, English hotels were renowned throughout the world, or all over the Continent at any rate, and acknowledged by everyone to surpass all others. Never before or since has such luxurious and comfortable inn accommodation fallen to the lot of the traveller. He was always received with a hearty welcome by mine host himself, his very wants appeared to be anticipated, and the landlady, generally a motherly, comely personage, thought it not beneath her dignity to personally see after his comforts. 'To take mine ease at mine inn' had a real meaning in those days.

The food was good, not to say excellent, and, moreover, it was well cooked, and not seldom served on costly plate; the linen was of the finest, and the port and claret were seldom anywhere to be equalled, and certainly nowhere excelled. On one occasion it is related of this place, that on tasting a fresh pipe of wine a certain well-known nobleman, one connected with the Court, and who used to select the wine for the royal table, remarked 'that it was as good as any his Majesty had, if not better.' Macaulay says of these old coaching hostelries (the large and noted ones it is to be presumed) that 'the beds were, as often as not, hung with silk, the cooking and viands were perfection, and rare clarets and other wines could be had for the ordering.' And the portly figure of the jovial, well-to-do landlord, with his honest open face, perhaps just a little wanting in fineness, his top-boots and frilled shirt—Punch's very ideal of John Bull—harmonised well with his surroundings, and was suggestive of the ample fare that might be expected within. Of the same kind, probably, was our hostel in bygone times; but now how changed! On our corridor alone there were twenty-four rooms empty—unfurnished and bare, of course; and yet night after night these used to be filled, and many a rollicking, roystering company doubtless met together and had good times within the four walls of the hotel.

Now as we returned to our rest our footsteps resounded in a melancholy manner along the dark deserted passages, and our shadows flitted about in the dim uncertain candle-light, suggesting to us

ghosts of former revellers, and giving us an eerie feeling. No wonder the good old-fashioned ghost has become somewhat rare of late. What proper-minded spirit could put up with the garish light of gas, to say nothing of electricity? Was the hotel haunted? We had visited houses with such a reputation that, judging from appearances, deserved such a fate far less. But to us, at any rate, that night the house was haunted by memories of old times. In spite of all, however, we slept more or less, and in our slumbers the past rose up before us; we had a Rip van Winkle sort of dream—backwards, however, instead of forwards—and when we awoke in the morning we could hardly realise at the first start we were really existing in this nineteenth century. We wondered, if the famous lexicographer could come back to life again and could revisit his old haunts at Chapel House, &c., or could even see our inn as now, living on with all its life and grandeur gone, what he would say and think. What a pity the impossible cannot happen at times! Or take him to one of our gigantic modern limited liability creations, and ask his opinion of that; I trow it would not be a very enthusiastic one!

Before breakfast we were tempted to wander along the deserted corridors, and we looked in at some of the old rooms. How desolate they appeared! It was a pitiable sight; the ceilings giving way, the paper on the walls peeling off, the dust of ages on the window-panes, the woodwork given over to dry rot, where once all was bright and gay and kept in the pink of order. We noticed

some of the window panes were much scratched over with various names, which, from the remarks and legends beneath, showed some were travelling to join their regiments, others journeying to and from college. The dates were of a century and more ago. Those simple inscriptions, doubtless made in a thoughtless merry mood by the wild youngsters of a past generation, long since gone the way of all flesh, set us thinking a good deal and moralizing as well. All those long years these fragile pieces of glass have kept a faithful and plain record of the various persons whose names and particulars are traced thereon, when possibly other memorials of them, in pre-durable stone, may have perished or been obliterated. In a deserted room of a half-forsaken hotel, we chance travellers a hundred years later read the inscriptions, and formed from them an idea of our own—probably quite an erroneous one—of the manner of men who wrote them. All we could say was, 'Peace to their ashes!' We had no diamond with us or we might have been tempted for once, and upon this occasion only, to have written our names and dates below those already existing, describing our method and purpose of travelling, to be read and pondered over by future generations—who knows?

CHAPTER V.

A Gloomy Day—Lights and Shadows—A Wayside Monument—Across Country—A Doubtful Lane—In a Fix—A Camp Out—Wild Flowers—Home and Foreign Scenery—A Capital Road—A Rainbow—Coventry—A Quaint Old City—An Old Steeple—The Restorations of Ancient Buildings—A Punning Epitaph—A Fine Hall—Origin of the term 'To send to Coventry.'

THE weather so far had been propitious for us; however, the morning we left Shipston a change appeared not only probable but imminent. Suspicious-looking clouds were hovering about, a soft south-west wind was blowing, which, however pleasant, was suggestive of rain; moreover, the barometer had fallen considerably in the night—at least our aneroid had, for we always carry that useful little instrument about with us on our driving tours. Such a thing as a weather-glass our half-furnished hotel naturally did not boast of.

All day long we watched with unabated interest the play of light and shade over the landscape, and now and again a glint of golden sunshine would rake the distant woodlands and far-off hills, which stretched away to the right and left of us until lost in the dreamy, uncertain blue of the horizon; and anon, the clouds would break apart overhead, letting down a gleam of warm sunlight on to a portion of the scene before us, and this would slowly travel along, affording

many beautiful and unexpected effects, revealing to us bits of hidden loveliness, all unseen or unnoticed before. Yonder it fell upon an old church tower; again, it lightened up a clump of sombre woods, and revealed beyond an old timbered cottage; then it rested upon the old grey walls of some ancient manor-house whose gabled ends and chimneys just showed amidst a mass of thick foliage; next, as it travelled along, we caught the yellow gleam of corn-fields; and before we had done wondering what else would be shown to us, the gleam suddenly died away. But, as it died, another was born, and this in its turn disclosed to us what we did not observe previously, an old bridge, before and beyond which a silvery sheen and a sparkle told of a river or stream running along the valley; and anon it alighted upon an old ruined mill, and then it gilded a forest of pines that fringed the spur of the nearest hill, at the foot of which lay nestled a small village or town, and so on—endless and unexpected variations of the landscape were brought momentarily into brighter prominence.

After four miles of pleasant road, the only thing of particular interest on the way being the picturesque village of Tredington, possessing a grand and tall church-tower majestic enough for any city, we came at the junction of two roads upon what appeared to us to be a monument in the Gothic style, and simply though chastely decorated. This monument both attracted our attention and raised our curiosity as to its purpose. We therefore dismounted in order to inspect it more closely, and dis-

covered the following inscription upon it on one side :—

Six miles
To Shakspere's town, whose name
Is known throughout the earth ;
To Shipston four, whose lesser fame
Boasts no such poet's birth ;

and on the other—to be discovered only by search—ran this legend, which left much to our imagination as to the cause of this wayside monument being erected, thus :—

After darkness, light,
From light hope flows,
And peace in death
In Christ a sure repose.
Spes : 1871.

The why and wherefore of such a structure being raised here puzzled us not a little. It was placed in such an out-of-the-way spot ; few people appeared to travel on the road excepting farmers going to or returning from market, and possibly an occasional carrier, so that it would be seen by few. It was, therefore, wasting its beauty on the desert air. Strangely enough, no one we met could tell us anything about this lonely and singular erection, more than we knew ourselves, and it certainly failed to explain itself.

By-and-by we called a halt and took a glance at our maps and had our road-books out, over which we had a lengthened consultation, the result of which was that we decided to change our course and to make for Coventry instead of continuing straight on as we had originally intended ; for we found that our road would eventually land us in Birmingham and

the 'Black Country,' to visit which we had no desire. Indeed, we were particularly anxious above all things to avoid that blighted portion of England; having once driven through it, we never wish to repeat that dreadful experience. If there is a scene of desolation upon earth, a spot where all that is beautiful has been destroyed by man and given over altogether without reserve of any kind to Mammon, that spot is the 'Black Country.' Rightly has it been named. Driving through it at night, however, especially if the clouds lay low and reflect the many glowing, seething furnaces, it has a weird and startling, unearthly effect, grand and almost sublime, though certainly not beautiful, and more suggestive of the entrance to the infernal regions than anything belonging to this world. What a pity Dante could not have observed it! And yet, one time, that part of England, judging by some of its surroundings, must have been amongst the most beautiful portions of the country.

We had now left the main road, and had to find our way across country lanes, and as these exist for local convenience and have no consideration for the through traveller, we had some difficulty in threading our way amongst the maze of perplexing twistings and turnings. At one place we regularly lost ourselves and nearly came to grief. We had followed up a road, a lonely one, rather doubtful all the time if we were doing right, but there were no cottages near nor anyone about to get information from. Gradually the road got worse and eventually became a mere track; and then we had gates to open, which

did not promise well, and we expected at every turn to be brought up standing, judging most probably our way would end in a farmhouse or a field; but every now and again, just as we were in despair, a sudden and unexpected turn would take place, and on it went. There was one thing: the surface could not get worse unless it ceased to be a road altogether, which was a sort of a negative comfort. Presently, a fresh misfortune happened to us; the twistings and turnings began to lean the wrong way, and at last we actually found ourselves travelling helplessly in the reverse direction to that in which we should have been going. This was a pleasant predicament to be in, and there was absolutely no one about, not even a human habitation to be seen; the only signs of life were a few sheep, who stared at us in a surprised, vacant manner, and these were of no use to us, and our maps were utterly worthless here, for they did not even show the track at all. It was certainly very provoking, as we had a long stage to make that day, and could not afford to waste both time and our horses' strength wandering aimlessly about; and I am afraid we lost our tempers and blamed each other for ever having ventured upon that road—each of us would have it that the other suggested it; the amusing part of the performance being that, when we first struck it and all appeared to be going well and prosperous, we both claimed the credit of having first decided to try the lane. We certainly were in a fix, for the road was heavy work for the horses, and after having proceeded on it so far we did not like to turn back, nor did we feel

inclined to proceed further forward without knowing where it would lead us to in the end. So we did what a good many other people would have doubtless done had they been in our place—we decided to camp out, and rest ourselves and our horses, and see if anything or anyone would turn up. We duly rested ourselves, but nothing happened, and we were just as wise as before. The horn was got out and a long and loud blast sounded upon it with many and prolonged flourishes, to see if that would bring anyone forth by arousing their curiosity; we had found by former experience this *ruse* to succeed, but it failed on the present occasion—we might as well have blown it to the sea. Something had now to be done; we could not remain where we were all day, and it was decided I should tramp ahead and explore the road for a mile or so, and report thereon. I had not proceeded far when I found the doubtful track ended, leading into a very fair lane, which, moreover, tended in the right direction; so we were soon again on a good road, speeding along at a merry pace, which we rejoiced in after our enforced crawl along that dreadful track.

There was now a capital road, which we managed to keep for the rest of the day; the latter portion was a little up and down, but nothing to complain of, and the scenery was all the most fastidious could desire. In fact, the last few miles we drove through an avenue of trees; these at first were connected with hedges, but presently the latter vanished, and on either side of us were open commons and heaths, our road still being lined with trees. Upon the open

country the sunshine glinted down, for the clouds had now all cleared away, and a varied landscape of great beauty was revealed all bathed in a rich glory of mellow light; beyond the gorse and bracken-covered commons we caught peeps of waving woodlands, and, further away again, of blue and purple hills; and here and there a faint grey of upward-curling smoke told where a cottage or hamlet lay concealed. Ourselves being in the cool shade of overhanging foliage the while, made the scene doubly effective. Now and then a startled rabbit or a timid hare would dart across our path, but that was all the life we saw.

Presently the three tall spires of the ancient city of Coventry came into sight, telling out a pale orange in the rays of the setting sun against a dark background of finely-shaped clouds, for the stormy elements had dispersed that way, and all at once a glorious sight opened up before us—a rainbow spanned the sky, and framed the picture of the town. It was a picture that would have rejoiced the heart of Turner could he have witnessed it as we did, the rainbow blending earth and sky together, and surrounding as with a halo of glory the gilded spires of the distant city.

We had more than once before visited Coventry in our many wanderings about England, but we generally found a second visit to such places almost as interesting as the first; there was nearly always something to be seen which we had previously missed; besides, old places are like old faces and old friends—we are always glad to see them again.

In the morning, before starting, we took a stroll round the quaint old city, whose narrow winding streets, ancient houses and buildings, give it such a curious old-world look, in pleasing contrast to so many other towns, which appear only too delighted to get rid of all flavour of antiquity, and become consequently monotonously uninteresting. A city that speaks to you of the past, of half-forgotten histories and traditions of bygone times, is more worth than fifty modern ones, with all their regular, meaningless, so-called handsome buildings, of unlimited plate-glass and obtrusive showiness. Fortunately, in England there are but few towns, however modernized, but possess some relic or relics of the past, that afford a fund of interest and inquiry to the sojourner therein.

The three churches of Coventry are all notable and of great interest. The steeple of the chief of these is so much weathered and decayed, that we could make out none of the details of the original carving. The figures of saints and others that adorn it, strangely enough, are mostly perfect, evidently being of more recent work, or carved in a more durable stone. These form a startling contrast to the crumbling spire, which (when we were there, at any rate) sadly wanted repairing. The restorer is a necessary evil, much as we could wish we could do without him; a building must be maintained, and when the time comes—as come it must—the only thing left is to be careful to employ the right man, a man of the type of the late and much-regretted Sir G. Scott, one of the few

of whom it can be truly said he never spoilt anything he restored.

Too many architects, unfortunately, seem far more anxious to show what they please to consider their own ability and originality (save the mark!), than to restore, to the best of their knowledge and opportunity, the edifice entrusted to their care to its former condition. A restorer, of all men, should be the most scrupulously conservative; he should, by every means in his power, endeavour to trace back and follow out the spirit and intentions of the first builders, even to the smallest detail of carving. He is not employed to design a building, but to repair one—in the one case, originality is a very possible merit; in the other, much the reverse.

An old building, hoary with age, with its grey, time-worn walls, mellowed and many-tinted by exposure to all weathers for centuries, having still in places here and there the very marks of the original mason's chisels, possesses a wonderful charm —a hold upon the imagination to be felt but not readily described. It is a precious heirloom, a history writ in stone, and carries one back to the dim, far-off, uncertain past. Such a priceless treasure deserves all care.

I have a friend who possesses a fine old Elizabethan house, and he is the very man to own such a place; he glories in keeping it up in its original state and style, even to the tapestry on the walls, and peacocks in the old-fashioned gardens. And how do you imagine he sets to work to restore the place when requisite? Well, when any piece or

portion of the stonework has become decayed or shows signs of crumbling, before it has gone too far he has it exactly copied, line for line, cut for cut, as far as it is possible to do so; and then, when perfectly satisfied with the result, the old worn-out carving is carefully removed, and the freshly-chiselled stone takes its place, and the result is all that can be desired.

But enough of restorers and their works. Whilst these ideas had been running in my head, we had been wandering over Trinity Church, admiring its fine old carved-stone pulpit, its seventeenth-century communion table of black oak, its antique brass lectern, and other relics of the past. In this church is a monument erected to the memory of that almost, if not quite, forgotten worthy, Philemon Holland, the translator of Camden's 'Britannia,' and other works, and in many respects a noticeable man in his day. The epitaph upon this, and which he wrote himself shortly before his death, is of interest for its clever play on words, and which, unlike the inscription on Rosamond's tomb, mentioned in a former chapter, can be fairly translated into English without altogether losing its punning qualities. These, then, are the concluding lines of the epitaph :—

'Si quæras ratio quænam sit nominis, hæc est :
Totus-terra fui, terraque totus ero.'

And which last line, I take it, can be done into English in this wise: 'I was whole-land (Holland), and land-wholly (earth to be presumed) shall I be.'

Strolling back to our hotel, we glanced inside St. Mary's Hall, a grand building, in which is some

very fine tapestry hung on the walls. It struck us as somewhat strange to see a monument (erected to the memory of some notable whom I have forgotten now) in this public place.

The city is now a great centre for the manufacture of bicycles, and tricycles, and quadricycles, for that matter. In the days of my youth, to be sent to Coventry was not considered to be a very delightful thing; now, for a boy to be sent to Coventry with money in his pocket is, as a rule, of all things that which he most desires; that is, at least, if he has any of the cycling mania about him—a mania from which most boys appear to suffer more or less at one time or another. The origin of the familiar term, 'to be sent to Coventry,' is not so generally known. It appears that during the Civil Wars there was a considerable amount of tension and ill-feeling between the inhabitants of the place and the soldiers quartered in the city; so much so, indeed, that the latter were entirely excluded from any company save their own. Hence the phrase 'to be sent to Coventry' arose amongst the troopers as being equivalent to being ostracised from all society.

CHAPTER VI.

A Bad Road—A Mining Country—Old Mines—Lopsided Houses—Nuneaton—An Old Hostelrie—Signboards—A Dangerous Bit of Road—An Obelisk by the Wayside—A Quaint Village and Inn—Artists and Photographers—A Classical Church—An Old-world Hamlet—Village Names—Ashby-de-la-Zouch—A Visitor's Book—Bathing Establishment—The Saline Waters—A Bad Speculation—The Castle—Old Feudal Strongholds and their Builders—The General History of English Castles—The Restorer in his Glory—A Fine Gothic Monument.

THE road from Coventry to Nuneaton was a very rough one, the unevenness of the way being caused by the large coal traffic that passes over it, for we were now travelling through the outskirts of a rich mining district. All around from our elevated position (we had mounted to pretty high ground) was a varied prospect of tall chimneys, high engine-houses and their accompanying works and outbuildings. The wheels projecting over the pits, from which wire ropes led down to the depths below, were constantly at work, and the laborious puff, puff, of the engines as they slowly drew up the heavy load of coal came to us continually from one quarter or another accompanied by intensely white looking clouds of steam which gave a busy, bustling look to the landscape not altogether unpleasing, and a suggestion of hidden wealth and the enterprise of man in obtaining it. At a distance—it must be a good distance, however—one or two

pits, not more, are by no means a disagreeable feature in the landscape; in this respect they are like a railway which, when sufficiently far off to have all the ugliness of and scars caused by cuttings and embankments hidden or softened down, gives by the white tail of steam a feeling of life and human occupation to the scene.

Although there were many pits about, the country was not covered all over with them; and mingled with the strange mining erections were fields and woods, affording quite a curious picture of many contrasts to the eye, the dark colour of the buildings bringing out well the fresh green around. We passed village after village on the road, with here and there a deserted worked-out pit, the surrounding buildings and tall chimneys standing out weirdly and boldly against a waste of grey sky. From these all the valuable machinery and accessories had been removed; but generally the large beam of the pumping engine was left, projecting aimlessly out and looking strangely gaunt and useless. These deserted old engine-houses are most striking and uncommon objects in the landscape; high and square they stand, and at dusk or in the twilight, seen against an evening sky, they might, by a stranger, be easily mistaken for a ruined keep of some old castle. In years to come, when time has perfected the ruins, and the inevitable ivy and moss have claimed them for their own, and when perchance the owl will flit about in their dim shadowy recesses, they will doubtless possess a certain quaint picturesqueness. And as of necessity they have

had to be well and strongly constructed to withstand the strain of powerful engines, they may possibly endure as long as have the old feudal strongholds, and it may even be that future generations of artists may admire and paint these old structures. Certainly in the gloaming, when some of their prosaic surroundings are mystified or lost in obscurity, one of these old engine-houses standing up stern and dark and grim, the home of desolation (the owl and the bat, those ruin haunters, being the only signs of life), impress the mind as being most weird and effective objects.

From time to time the land has given way and settled over the disused pits, causing the houses and even churches to assume a lop-sided appearance. These buildings were standing in all manner of angles, looking for all the world as though they had been out on the spree over-night, and could not stand upright in the morning.

Nuneaton was our first halt and stage, and we were not sorry to get off the bumpy road; here we found exceedingly comfortable quarters at a very old inn—the Bull's Head to wit.

We noticed one peculiarity about Nuneaton, a peculiarity very much to be appreciated by a stranger, though possibly of not much utility to a native. All the streets leading from the market-place, or the space that did duty for one, had direction boards attached to the sides of various houses, so that without asking you could find your way out of the town to where you wished to go. Anyone who has driven about country will understand at once

the blessings of such an arrangement, for it is always more worrying and difficult to get out of a strange town than it is to find your way across country even in the most confusing parts.

We came to the conclusion on leaving this place that it was not at all a suitable residence for nervous people who keep horses—that is, if many of the roads out of the town were similar to the one we traversed. First we had to cross a bridge with a low parapet, over a main line of railway, with several engines beneath busily and noisily shunting; then came a sharp and sudden turn to the left down to a level bit with rails on either side of us, and only a slight fence between the road and the iron way, with more locomotives careering wildly about, then under the line again. It is a nasty enough bit to drive in the day-time with fresh or high-spirited horses, but on a dark night it must be a very disagreeable spot to pass through, when, added to all the above objections, there is the sudden glare of light thrown from the engine furnaces upon the steam and smoke.

Our morning's stage had been ten miles, our afternoon's one would be eighteen, with but small prospect of a bait on the way; thus somewhat exceeding our daily average distance of about twenty miles. As the road was a good one, on the principle of making hay while the sun shines we sped along at a good pace, as we did not know how long it might continue so, and we did not wish to be benighted if we could help it. We were steering across country. Our course was a difficult one enough in the daylight, and there is not any great amount

of pleasure or excitement in being belated in a maze of country lanes, especially where the natives are few and far between to put you right if you are wrong.

About four miles on our way we came upon a stone obelisk, erected in a corner of a wood, in a lonely part of the country. We pulled up and descended to inspect the same, and to see what we could make of it. We discovered the following inscription upon it, which we copied :—

IN MEMORY OF
GEORGE FOX,
FOUNDER OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,
BORN NEAR THIS SPOT, A.D. 1624.
DIED A.D. 1690.
AND WAS INTERRED IN BUNHILL FIELDS
BURIAL GROUND, LONDON.
ERECTED 1872.

As we found to be so often the case, our capital trotting road came in time to an end, and was succeeded by an up-and-down one—indeed, a very much up-and-down one—and so our pace had to be moderated accordingly. But as the road became hilly the scenery improved ; so we were even pleased at the change, for our level bit of running, though all that could be desired for travelling, was so hemmed in with high hedges, that we saw little or nothing of the country beyond, save an occasional peep over a gate or a lower portion of the fence here and there. The first village we came to was a most picturesque one, with a delightful looking old rural inn, with its signboard swinging restlessly and noisily to and fro in the wind. Outside, at any rate, the hostel seemed all one could desire ; whether the

interior accommodation would have been equal to the exterior I cannot say, as we did not test it. It struck us that altogether the hamlet would make a capital subject for a picture, the much-restored church excepted. It had quite an ancient look, appearing doubtless very much the same as it did a couple of centuries or so ago; so that in a study of it a group of Cavaliers or Roundheads could consistently and with much effect be introduced, either drinking or quarrelling or loafing about in front of the quaint old inn, and would give the necessary life and interest to the scene.

The church, it must be confessed, spoilt the place, and in a painting it would have to be conveniently ignored. That is one of the numerous advantages artists have over photographers—the ability to select, alter, and arrange their subjects. A view or a scene may be in most respects perfect; but in the near foreground it may happen is an ugly shed, or a new wall, or a heap of bricks, or some one thing or another that completely spoils the composition. A photographer has to take the evil with the good; the artist chooses only the good. But to return to the church: the body and tower of this is in the ugliest classical style possible; it has no redeeming feature, and at the top of the tower is a large cross which does not improve matters. This, I suppose, was intended to be ornamental, but it is nothing of the sort. Doubtless there was here originally an old Gothic edifice, which most probably was pulled down to make room for this most perfectly ugly structure. The chancel has, however, by some good fortune, escaped the spoiler's hand. This

remnant of the old work looked doubly beautiful in such direct contrast to the badly proportioned, unfeeling, hideous erection it was grafted on to; and, moreover, it possesses an architectural gem in the shape of a fine and interesting east window of a most uncommon form, and reminding us somewhat of the one in the chapel at Holyrood.

More up and down hill, and then another old-time village came into sight, with some dear old houses, evidently existing for the sake of the water-colour painter, with prim gardens and old-fashioned flowers.

There was a village green here and a pond, and from the green distant peeps of a well-wooded country were to be had all around, so that in a scenic point of view the place was almost perfect. There were a few geese on the pond, and a boy was fishing in it, and, moreover, catching some of its finny inhabitants—small fry, certainly—but still he had sport. Children were romping and laughing on the green; a carrier's cart was stopping opposite one of the low red-tiled cottages, the owner of which was flirting with—or courting perhaps, I should say—the cottager's pretty daughter. Two waggons, each with four horses and bells, were slowly, musically, and peacefully proceeding through the place, laden with sacks evidently from the mill; so that Twycross, that day at any rate, had more appearance of life than most rural hamlets seem to possess.

It may be we were fortunate in the time of our visit, and that another day it might seem dull and prosaic. Then possibly the geese might be in the fields out of sight, the children be at school, the

carrier's cart away, and no teams making their way along the road, and so all be still and lifeless. We noticed here what we presumed to be a relic of the old posting days—the name of the village plainly painted on a board, which was exhibited on the front of one of the houses, just as though the hamlet was a station and the road a railway. We had observed this before in two or three out-of-the-world places in Leicestershire and Yorkshire, but nowhere else to our recollection. In the old times, when people travelled altogether by road, doubtless such notices were very useful by informing the wayfarer of the names of the places he passed through. We wished more of the old name-boards had been left.

It was getting late when we neared Ashby-de-la-Zouch, just before arriving at which town we passed through an estate, the owner of which had evidently spent considerable sums in laying out and planting extensive avenues of young trees for the benefit of his descendants, for the present proprietor could not possibly in his life-time hope to reap any benefit from them, unless indeed he was a very young man and lived to a good old age.

Upon entering Ashby-de-la-Zouch we passed in the outskirts of the town a comfortable looking modern hotel, with extensive stabling opposite, but, fastidious mortals that we were, instead of at once putting up there and being thankful, we elected to proceed right into the town, and have a look round the place and see if there was a better one. When we got into the market-place we were pleased we had done so, for we came across in it a quaint-

looking old hostelrie. We drove into the courtyard of this in high spirits, expecting we had found a regular old-fashioned inn.

Picturesque it certainly was, and outside appearances suggested cosy and comfortable quarters within. Alas! we had a sudden damper placed upon all our agreeable anticipations. Upon ringing the bell a servant presently came to the door, not immediately by any means, however. In reply to our inquiries she said certainly we could have rooms, but the landlady and her daughters were all out, and she did not know when they would return; and she did not think she could manage to procure us any meals till they came back. Moreover, the ostler had evidently deemed it a favourable time to take a little holiday on his own account, for he too was absent somewhere in the town. This settled us, and we thought that under such management the hotel would soon be settled too. We certainly had not calculated upon such a cool reception.

There was nothing for it but to drive back to the other despised hotel and see what hospitality that would show us. It was a large building, classical in style, and more like a temple than a house of entertainment. It had an imposing portico, with windows at regular intervals on either side above and on a level, with here and there sham ones, where the internal economy of the place would not permit of the real article. However, the inside was better than the out, and, in spite of its classical and most unsuitable architecture, we fared very well in every respect, and had quite a cosy room at the

back of the house which looked on to a large garden. We discovered we were the only visitors in the hotel, and, it being a large one, the knowledge was rather depressing; but, on the other hand, we had plenty of attention. We amused ourselves in the evening by looking over the visitors' book, and found amongst the ordinary run of mankind quite a number of signatures of members of the aristocracy, besides those of sundry famous men, inscribed therein. There was as well many remarks, curious and otherwise, *re* the hotel, grounds, waters, &c., for it appears there is a mineral spring here, and at one time large buildings for baths had been erected in the grounds. We wondered that, as the book contained so many signatures of great and noted men, it had remained unmolested. Collectors and others have at times a curious notion of *meum et tuum*, and, as we have noticed before now, a visitors' book at hotels is a favourite hunting-ground for them, and by no means always a barren one.

The bathing establishment does not seem to have proved a success; respecting which we copied the following from the book in question, and which may be of interest:—'Having come here' (Ashby-de-la-Zouch is, of course, understood) 'in order to make myself acquainted by personal observation with the characters of the saline waters employed for hot baths, I beg to state that I consider them to possess properties likely to make them very useful in the treatment of many chronic complaints. I think it only right of me to state that I regard the Bath establishment equal, if not

superior, to any other I have met with either in England or on the Continent. Moreover, I beg to add that I consider the advantages which this place offers for hot baths are not a little enhanced by the accommodation and entertainment offered by the Royal Hotel.—Signed, W. M. FISHER, M.D., Downing Professor of Medicine, Cambridge.'

There is no date to this testimonial it will be observed, nor does it state for what chronic complaints, or in what particular respect or respects, the waters would be likely to prove beneficial. At any rate, the spring has failed to become famous.

The next morning before breakfast we strolled out through the garden to inspect the bathing establishment. We found this to consist of a large formal building, meant to appear like a Grecian temple, but reminding us more of a workhouse than anything else. In the centre of the pile was a ball-room, fast, very fast, going to decay ; a considerable portion of the ceiling had fallen down, and there was a great gap in the roof, and the rain showed signs of coming in. But in spite of this, the baths still appeared to be kept open in a half-hearted sort of way. Evidently, however well intentioned, the attempt to start a spa here was a complete failure. It appeared to us to have been made on too ambitious a scale. A large ball-room was not a necessity at first, and must have cost a considerable amount, that would have been much better spent in other ways ; till the place had got fairly established, well known and patronised, such luxuries were unnecessary and uncalled for. Upon making

inquiries we were told the landlord would spend no more money on the place, and, as the whole affair seemed doomed to come eventually to grief (if it could not be considered to have done so already), we could hardly blame him for thus protecting himself.

Naturally, as the owner of the estate did not see his way to do anything further either in keeping the place up or in repairing it, the tenant, whose interest was merely temporary, could hardly be expected to take an enthusiastic view of things, and spend his money, probably never to see it again, and very possibly besides losing he would be informed he was a fool for his pains by his wise friends.

In fact, so complete was the downfall of this grand scheme, that one wing of the hotel had to be built off and was fast going the way of all uncared-for buildings. It was a thousand pities things were as they were, for the idea was by no means a bad one, and might, if it had been cautiously and wisely carried out, have succeeded. There are not so many spas in England that we can spare one.

As we only intended to make a comparatively short stage of fourteen miles on to Derby that day, and there appeared a good deal to see in and around Ashby-de-la-Zouch, we determined to wander about the place all the morning and proceed on our way in the cool of the afternoon.

Naturally, our first visit was to the castle, a fine old relic of ancient times. We found our way to it over some fields, and rambled about the old ruins of our own free will, guideless, and thankful for that

mercy. It was pleasant to discover a ruin in a natural state; no footpaths, or gates, or railings, or notice-boards, or tables and chairs and broken bottles about, suggestive of 'Arrys and picnickers were to be seen. We were left free to our own imaginations and devices, to grope about the old pile how and as we liked; we were not obliged to listen to doubtful stories and apocryphal traditions, and be hurried along from one part of the place to another. But though we were without a guide, our wanderings were not purposeless; the old weather-beaten, stained, and crumbling walls had a history for us which we read and interpreted to ourselves; 'sermons in stones' we found everywhere around us.

These old feudal strongholds have a stern massive grandeur all their own, which is very impressive to the beholder. Though their day and glory have long since departed, still haughtily they stand, as though conscious of, but too proud to mourn, their fate. Within their walls, brave warriors all clad in glittering mail and courtly dames have held high revels and wassails. We felt in rambling along their many and gloomy passages, chambers, and halls, that we walked on the ground where of old stern-faced warriors trod, whose very names now are lost in the dim antiquity of the past. Timid sheep were nibbling the long rank grass in the courtyard as we passed through, which otherwise was deserted and lonely enough, and there too nettles, docks, and brambles had made their home. How great the contrast from bygone times to the present! How unwarlike does the castle now appear! Strangely

enough, I can hardly imagine a more peaceful scene than an old ruined castle. It seems almost impossible in viewing such in the present day to realize the numerous tragedies that must have taken place within them, that men really fought and bled upon their walls. It is hard to conceive that captives had endured a living death within those bare dungeons now open to the sky, they look so innocent of such black deeds, albeit damp and dreary enough.

Though strength was the chief end and aim of the builders of these structures, ornamentation was not altogether forgotten or neglected, and where it could be indulged in without weakening the defensive and offensive properties of the pile, it was ; as witness the many finely-carved and groined roofs, quaintly-shaped windows (internal ones, of course), much-chiselled chimneypieces, and decorated doorways.

The history of this castle appears to resemble that of most other similar ones in England. A general tradition of the one will roughly do for all. Of course Mary Queen of Scots was at one time imprisoned here, in charge of the Earl of Huntingdon. What castle would have a complete history without having at one time or another held captive that poor lady ? And, as well, Queen Elizabeth visited here ; and equally of course the castle came to the natural ending of all such strongholds—it was held for the King, and was after a siege taken by the Parliamentarians and dismantled by them. Such is an epitome of the history of the castle of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, so called after one Allan-la-Zouch, who held the manor here in Henry III.'s time, to distinguish it from

other less famous Ashbys. In the novel of 'Ivanhoe' Sir Walter Scott has cast his magic wand over the spot.

We next proceeded to inspect the church, which is close by; and on arriving at the lych-gate—oh, what a sight met our astonished gaze! The restorer in all his glory! The churchyard was covered with large blocks of stones, and men were busy with mallet and chisel upon them, and the sacred edifice itself was surrounded by scaffolding. What a good time the restorer must have been having, to be sure! How supremely happy and contented with himself he must have felt! This old church was a dainty morsel for him. Of course we well knew what was being done, but for curiosity we asked one of the men, to hear what his reply would be, which came as follows: 'We be about a-restorin' o' her, aye, but she'll look foine when we a' done the job—just like new.' The last words were doubtless true enough. Of course such a restoration meant the destruction of the church's history—in stone at least.

Near our hotel we noticed a fine monument or memorial erecting at the corner of two roads; in design it was somewhat similar to the various crosses raised to the memory of Queen Eleanor by her king. The structure was nearly completed, and was really fine and most pleasing. There was no inscription upon it when we were there, but the ostler told us it was in memory of the Countess of Loudoun. This structure interested us not a little, as affording some idea of how Early English Gothic work appeared when quite new and fresh, and before time had tinted it and toned it down.

CHAPTER VII.

A Delightful Road—Charnwood Forest—A Ruined Manor House—A Long Descent—An Extensive Panorama—A Long Bridge—Swarkestone—A Hunters' Inn—A Collision Averted—Windmills—A Sudden Change in the Weather—A Race against Time—A Thunderstorm—About Lightning—Hotel Museum—Old Coaching Bills—Relics of Richard III.—A Fresh Morning—A Stone Country—Picturesque Hillsides—Mountainous Countries *versus* Level Ones—Belper—Old Mills—Ambergate—The Vale of Cromford—The Derwent—A Bit of an Old Wall—A Hill-climbing Railway—A Comfortable Hotel—Inn Gardens—An Evening Prospect.

We had a glorious drive that afternoon on to Derby; the weather was perfect, the road most excellent, and the scenery beautiful and varied. No wonder we were in high spirits as we once more found ourselves journeying merrily along, and declaring to each other that there was nothing in all the world half so jolly or delightful as driving across country. True, the barometer had fallen that day both considerably and suddenly, and as we left our hotel the ostler, looking up at the sky and vacantly ahead, as only ostlers can, had prophesied we should have rain before long. How we despised that man and barometers as well! Why, there was hardly a cloud to be seen overhead; there could not have been a more perfect tranquillity; and, besides, enough for us was the supreme enjoyment of the present. Let the morrow take care of itself; why should we worry ourselves about evils that might never happen?

How fresh and balmy was the air! A hundred various and blending odours came, wafted to us from the fields and woods around. The resinous fragrance of pine trees and the peculiar scent of the bean flower were amongst the most noticeable and assertive, besides being fresh to us this journey. What gentle music, too, the wandering winds made playing with the quivering leaves of the trees that in places made an avenue of our road, the indescribable harmonious sur, sur, sur of which reminded us of the distant ocean when at rest, as it lazily washes on the shore. The birds also did not neglect their part, and were singing right merrily from thicket and brake.

Every few yards brought new scenes before our eyes, the bright fresh green of the meadows near at hand contrasting well with the darker tints of distant woodlands and the soft silvery grey of the far-off hills. The hedge banks by the roadside were a picture in themselves, and full of a certain wild careless sort of beauty; the dog-rose was in all its glory and in all stages of bloom; the honeysuckle, too, abounded and flourished, and amongst the wilderness of ferns, grasses, and weeds on the ground were a wealth of half-hidden wild flowers.

We could not resist the temptation to gather some of the pale-eyed forget-me-nots, which had a special attraction for us. And as we drove along we thought England was indeed a very pleasant land—the very pleasantest of all lands. We thought so then and still think so now, and who shall say we were or are wrong?

The first portion of our road traversed a richly

timbered country; we had beautiful views of woods beyond woods, the background being composed of Charnwood Forest. At one spot we passed an old red-brick manor or farm-house in ruins, looking very picturesque and making altogether a charming picture—one that would gladden the eye of an artist, with its high-pitched gables, clusters of large chimneys, quaint old casement windows, ivied walls and rich colouring, the whole being framed with a mass of dark foliage.

Shortly after this old ruin we came upon a long descent of over two miles, from the top of which we had a most extensive and comprehensive view forward. The prospect was indeed a lovely one. There were broad rolling fields of blooming corn, and meads of emerald green, dotted here and there with sheep and cattle; many a peaceful cottage and quiet home were sleeping in the bright sunshine from which blue smoke curled upwards lazily to the sky; here and there the steeple of a village church peeped out from a mass of greenery, and far down in the vale we could trace the mazy course of a winding river, like a streak of silver running through the landscape.

At the foot of the hill we drove over an old stone bridge a mile or more in length, which crosses the river Trent and lowlands on either side on numberless massive arches: it was one of the longest bridges, if not the very longest, we had ever driven over. Doubtless the adjacent level grounds were flooded in the winter, and consequently the extended structure. In the bed of the river we noticed a

post was stuck with 'Dangerous' plainly written thereon; but the cause of the danger was not so clear, nor the reason why the post was there at all, unless indeed it could possibly be to warn fox-hunters against attempting to ford the stream at that spot; but then again, it could hardly be for that, for even the most enthusiastic hunter would scarcely deliberately attempt a ford when he could go over a bridge close by dryshod and without fatigue to his horse or loss of ground.

The river appeared to be very tranquil, not to say dull and slow, so it could hardly be intended for boating men; therefore, as we could not solve the riddle, and there was no one about to do so for us, we gave it up.

It afforded us a good deal of interest and amusement from time to time on our journey, to reason the why and wherefore of many puzzling things we saw. For instance, at one place we passed a few miles back we observed the church was built on the top of a bleak hill without even a solitary tree or a shrub near, and far away from all houses; we concluded it must have been erected thus, as a landmark in years past, when the country around was a forest wilderness. At another spot it was a mystery to us why a certain wise or foolish individual should have made his house one of many stories—unless indeed the said individual had a predilection for mounting stairs—where ground was plentiful and there appeared no good reason for his so doing.

At the farther end of the bridge we came upon the tiny village of Swarkestone. It appeared to

consist of only one or two houses, and to be very much out of the world; indeed, almost enough so to satisfy an anchorite. Here we were very much surprised to find a comfortable-looking inn, and one showing evident signs of prosperity—an unusual circumstance in such an out-of-the way place. So much, indeed, were we struck by this uncommon fact, that we inquired the cause of there being such a good and flourishing hostel in such an unpromising locality, and learnt that this was a great centre for fox-hunters, which explained everything, and saved us the trouble of suggesting a more unlikely eause.

Almost directly after leaving the village, while trotting along at a good pace, at a sudden and rather awkward turn in the road we came unexpectedly upon a toll-gate, which was shut, and obstructed the way. We had only just time to pull up our horses upon noticing it to avoid a collision. Had it been in the dark instead of in the daylight, and had we been travelling at the same rate, and also, had there been no light upon the bar, the chances in favour of an accident would have been considerable. A toll-gate, and a closed one, is—the Fates be praised!—a rarity in the present year of grace. They are one of the relics of times past we can cheerfully dispense with, and are now, save in a few benighted districts, almost wholly abolished, and promise in a few years to become as extinct as Messrs. Dodo, Mastodon, & Co. Presently our attention was attracted by some windmills busily at work, and very pleased we were to meet again such old friends. We have always loved them from our



AN OLD FRIEND.

youth upwards; they are one of the most life-giving features in a landscape possible to imagine; a water-fall or water-wheel have hardly the same effect or are so suggestive of easy motion. The windmill, of necessity, stands boldly out and prominently forth against the sky-line, and cannot, therefore, but claim attention.

Whilst we had been watching, fascinated almost by the steady sailing round and round of the great arms of these old mills, we had not observed the sudden change that had taken place in the weather. In front of us dark sombre clouds had hidden the deep clear blue. Stormy looking did they appear, with an angry red tint and an ominous outline and character that betokened thunder. Then we remembered the despised ostler's prophecy and the fall of the barometer, and we thought no longer disrespectfully or disparagingly of either. We gave the horses their heads and dashed along as fast as we could; it was a race between us and the storm, with all the odds in favour of the tempest. Now and again the wind swept past us in fitful gusts and then dropped as quickly as it rose; for a moment the leaves of the trees rustled and flickered, and then there was a perfect silence—the calm that precedes a storm. Suddenly a streak of vivid light flashed across the gloom, followed by a prolonged and majestic roll of thunder; huge drops of warm rain fell as large as half-crowns. Then there was a pause. All the while we urged the horses along at break-neck speed, in a vain endeavour to reach shelter before the inevitable downpour should take

place. Now the wind arose, and the strife of the elements began in right-down earnest; the drops became a torrent; it was as though it had never rained since the deluge and the heavens were making up for lost time. How the water flowed from off our waterproofs and aprons in ceaseless cascades on either side of the carriage! How the horses danced and pranced about, now shying back at the lightning, now ready to bolt at the sound of the thunder! How we rattled through the deserted streets of Derby, driving aimlessly along, looking out right and left for the first hotel! We were not at all fastidious about our quarters just then—a roadside public would have been a palace provided we could have put our horses up. Right before us we presently espied the Royal Hotel, and as we drove up under the archway and descended in the dry and out of the streets, we blessed the builders of old for their consideration of the comforts of travellers by road.

We fared well at the Royal; the landlady, good old soul, came to meet us, and at once lighted a fire in our cosy sitting-room, and we were soon all dry and comfortable again, discussing an excellent dinner, having forgotten all our outdoor discomforts. By the time we had finished our meal the storm was over, the sky was a clear dark blue, not a cloud was to be seen, the stars shone brightly down, and behind the dark houses of the town rose the pale crescent moon; only the cool freshness of the air, the wet, shining roads, and pools of water about told of the past deluge.

We noticed one thing respecting the storm: the lightning was not forked, as it is usually, nay, almost always, represented in pictures and drawings; it rather twisted and turned about like a narrow ribbon of fire; there were no sharp angular corners anywhere. We noted this particularly as an exceedingly brilliant flash or two told out plainly against the dark inky masses of cloud, and were for the moment photographed with great clearness upon our vision. Turner, in a painting of his (a view of Dover, if I remember aright), represented a flash of lightning thus and not forked, and the critics at the time said that he had evidently evolved it out of his inner consciousness, for there was nothing like it in Nature. Well, we saw the lightning as Turner saw it; the general idea of its forked appearance I believe to be due to the deception of the eye owing to the extreme rapidity of a flash.

During a severe storm in Liverpool a year or two ago, which the morning papers described as most severe, with unusually vivid lightning, an enterprising photographer managed to secure one or two tolerable negatives of the flashes—rather poor affairs, pictorially speaking, but of great interest otherwise, as a lens having no bias or any preconceived idea as to what a flash of lightning should be like, represented actually what was before it. These photographs showed all the flashes to be ribbon-like, and twisting about in all directions; there were no sharp angles or suggestions of them anywhere. So after all Turner was right, as he generally was in his representations of natural effects.

It is my belief there is no such thing as forked lightning; it is an impression of the brain, not a fact.

We found the hall of our hotel, and ample landing spaces upstairs, filled with curiosities—fine old carved chests and antique cabinets, besides some capital sporting and other pictures. It was, altogether, more like a museum than a house of entertainment, and we spent an hour or more inspecting these with considerable interest and amusement. The different relics, old play-bills, coaching announcements of bygone days, &c., had the appearance of being genuine, but more, of course, I cannot say. Amongst the various things we saw was an old printed notice on faded silk, framed; this we copied, as being of more than passing interest. It ran as follows :—

Defiance Coach
In 21 Hours from London
to Manchester on Sunday 10 April 1814
Brought the Glorious News of the
Tyrant Bounaparte
Having abdicated the Throne
And the Senate Declaring for
Loues XVIII.
This and almost every news of Importance
has been brought by this Coach to Manchester.

In another frame close to this was enclosed some much-decayed and faded crimson silk damask, richly embroidered, with the following description written underneath :—

Part of the furniture of the bed on which Richard III. slept at Bosworth Hall, Leicestershire, the night before the battle of Bosworth Field.

We awoke to an almost perfect morning the next

day—in fact, it would have been impossible for us to have improved it in any way, even had we so desired. The air was deliciously cool and bracing after the storm of the previous night; the wind-swept, storm-washed sky was of a deep sapphire blue, across which great white clouds went sailing by, causing a continual play of lights and shadows everywhere, with ever-varying effects and bright contrasts. The country looked delightfully fresh and pure and green, the rain had brought out the colour of everything; the foreground was full of rich, warm, mellow tints, and the far-off distance was an intense pure blue—such positive colour is very rare in an English landscape. There was neither dust nor glare, only a softened sunshine. The grasses, the hedge-rows, the numberless leaves of the trees, each retained some drops of moisture, which glistened in the sun, and were turned by it into countless diamonds, topazes, rubies, and emeralds. All Nature, it seemed, was in a joyous mood. The lark welcomed us into the open country with a thrilling song of gladness, a speck of quivering harmony in the deep blue above. Nor were other feathered warblers silent: we heard the blackbird, the thrush, and the bullfinch, and now and again came to us the curious harsh notes of the corncrake. The rooks, too, were apparently having a good time of it, for they passed over us in flights, returned again, and wheeled round and round the tall elms, caw, caw, cawing to each other incessantly; but, not understanding bird language, we were not much the wiser for all their gossip. The swallows, too,

were skimming over the ground in restless activity, and the busy hum of wandering bees greeted us along our way.

We were in a stone country now—all the houses, cottages, and even sheds, were of that material; red brick was no longer to be seen, nor the faded yellow of thatch, nor the warm-looking tiles that give such a glow of rich colour to the view when lit up by the sun. But the houses had all a substantial, solid look that was pleasing to the eye, and suggestive of warmth in winter and the ability to keep out the cold blast. By degrees the hedges gave way to walls, and these were not displeasing for a change, for they were old and mellowed by age, and not freshly erected and offensive to the eye.

Give Nature time and let her alone, and she will adorn the ugliest building. First she sends mosses and lichens; presently stone-crop makes an appearance, then ivy begins gradually but surely to creep up, and the wind and birds leave tiny seeds in the various crevices; in due course, grasses and small ferns and even flowers spring forth. The stones become tinted and toned with exposure to the atmosphere, and that which was once commonplace has become a thing of beauty.

Hills began to rise up on either side of us—along which the sunlight travelled, revealing many scenic beauties; dark pines fringed the breezy summits, from out of which grey rocks showed here and there, and graceful masses of foliage descended to the vale, interspersed with cultivated fields, green sward, and cosy-looking homes. The lower portions

of the slopes were of a much brighter tone than the higher parts. At the foot of the hills were more fields, upon the comparatively level ground, through which in and out wound a river, reflecting the blue and white of the sky. We felt we were now in Derbyshire, and nearing some of that famous county's most famous scenery. Every mile of our way appeared more beautiful than the last; each turn in the road disclosed some fresh point or view, similar and yet different from what we had seen before. Hilly countries have one great advantage over level ones—the continual change of the outlines of the highlands and peaks lends a constant variety and a special character to each scene. Even a single mountain seen from various points has distinctive features from each one, which features are again varied by clouds and mists.

Our midday halt was at Belper, a small though busy market and manufacturing town, and apparently a prosperous one. Here are some large cotton mills, some indeed of the largest in the kingdom, and we quite expected to be thoroughly disgusted with the place, but instead of this we were agreeably disappointed. To begin with, we found a very comfortable inn, which we had hardly expected, the stables of which were the best we had had during the journey. The old square courtyard, surrounded by stalls, loose-boxes, carriage-houses, &c., was actually all protected from the weather by an extensive glass roof, an unaccustomed luxury to us. The gigantic, many-windowed mills were by no means the ungainly and uncompromisingly ugly structures such

buildings generally—nay, almost always—are. They appeared to us to have been originally much smaller, but to have been added to from time to time as necessity required for extended business, or altered to suit improved machinery—such additions and alterations causing an irregularity and an absence of sameness that is advantageous in a picturesque point of view, whatever it may be commercially. Then bold, arched gateways, and the water running round their basement (like moats of old), all help to take away much of the barrack and box-like look of ordinary factories. The air, too, was pure around; no heavy pall of smoke hung over the place, hiding the glad sunshine; and just beyond the mills was the wide, free, open country, a rich and beautiful country, affording pleasant rural rambles over hill and dale, and along country lanes. Fortunate factory hands to live in such a town! How different is the lot of your brethren in such huge cities as Manchester, Bolton, Paisley, &c.!

The drive from Belper to Ambergate was one of continued and increasing loveliness. At the latter place there is a large junction, and we had to pass under the railway and then drive for some distance close alongside of it. Here several engines were standing idly but by no means quietly, for the escape of steam from them made a deafening sound which was re-echoed by the hills around; this caused our horses to become exceedingly frisky, and they began to rear and plunge about in such an awkward manner, that, though we were not actually nervous, still we were glad to get away from the spot with-



THE VALE OF CROMFORD, LOOKING TOWARDS MATLOCK.

out any further trouble. Just as we had cleared the junction, a prolonged whistle, followed almost instantaneously by a roar as of thunder accompanied by a quick 'chic, chic, chic, puff, puff, puff' and a whirlwind of dust and steam, told that the Manchester or Liverpool express was speeding on its lightning course Londonwards. We were pleased to have missed it; and as soon as it had passed the other engines commenced to whistle in chorus and began to move on their respective ways, or shunt about backwards and forwards and forwards and backwards, to an inexperienced observer in a very aimless manner.

We now turned to the left and entered the Vale of Cromford, to my mind one of the most beautiful of the Derbyshire dales, though certainly not improved by the railway running along one side of it. The valley is a narrow one; on either side are sloping hills, covered with various trees of many tinted foliage, from the dark and gloomy fir to the light and gay silvery birch. On the top of the hills bare rocks showed here and there, and purple moorlands were now and again visible. Along the valley runs the Derwent, as beautiful a river as the heart of an artist or of an angler could desire. In one spot it glides along with a smooth even current, reflecting as in a mirror the woods and overhanging cliffs above, then suddenly its silvery glass-like surface changes—it becomes agitated, small whirlpools appear, and near the shore in the miniature bays it eddies and whirls round and round and all reflection is lost; the colour now is more of a raw sienna

tint, with irregular markings of transparent green, and brown, and grey. Presently tiny waves arise tipped with cream-coloured foam, and then there is a sparkle as of myriads of diamonds as it makes a series of cascades over some hidden rocks below, only quickly once more to relapse into a quiet mood, with hardly a ripple to break its calm surface. As we proceeded along, one side of the valley in shade and one in the full glory of the sunlight, with the gleaming river at our feet, we thought it was as fair a scene as rocks, and stream, and hills, and woods could make. There was our road, a sleepy canal, the railway, and the river, all traversing the narrow vale, and at times there was not room for all, and the iron track, being the last comer, had to bury itself in the cliff sides, much to the advantage of the scenery, but to the disadvantage of the travellers thereby.

At one spot we were tempted to pull up and loiter about. It was on a piece of level sward, close by an old broken-down wall, and sheltered by some overhanging trees, through whose wilderness of leaves the soft sunlight shone, forming a twinkling pattern of green and gold all around us. From the heather-clad hills above a tiny stream gurgled adown its mossy-bordered channel, half hidden by ferns, plants, and wild flowers, but plainly showing its course by the fresh bright verdure caused by the welcome moisture. That bit of old wall was a picture; ivy and honeysuckle, briars and brambles, had all stolen over it, mosses flourished on it everywhere, and at its foot the

bracken luxuriated, brown, green, yellow, and red. The ragged robin, too, had made its home in the many crevices, as had a variety of tender ferns; and close at hand we saw a number of bilberry wires, with their light green leaves and the purple bloom of their fruit. As we looked upon that wall we wondered much whether such or a hedge was the more beautiful, and we concluded than an old wall that had been left for years to the care of Nature carried the palm.

Near our resting spot we discovered a strange railway boldly mounting right up the hill side at a gradient of one mile in eight. This wonderful sky-soaring track belongs to the Peak Railway. A stationary engine at the top of the hill pulls up the trucks—ordinary ones—two at a time by means of a stout wire rope. Now and again this has broken, and a general and very complete smash-up has been the result; but as no passengers are allowed to be carried, only goods and minerals being taken, there has been no loss of life. After mounting the hill-side, on the comparatively level top ordinary engines are employed to work the trains. This mountain line cost 200,000*l.* to construct; it is thirty-two miles long, and has not proved a successful venture to the original shareholders.

The approach to Matlock on this side is very fine—indeed it might almost without exaggeration be termed grand. The road enters through a narrow passage or defile blasted out of the solid rock, shortly after passing which the village is revealed, situated wholly on one side of the river; the other

consists of frowning limestone crags, which are nearly perpendicular, and are most effective. Bare they are at the top, but covered with pines, firs, and beech-trees lower down; and at their base are tangled thickets of brushwood, out from amongst which peep grey moss and ivy covered boulders, wrecks in former ages of the cliffs above. There is a certain wild beauty in the scene even now, though it is somewhat spoilt by the proximity of buildings. We drove up here to the New Bath Hotel (new only in name), and which proved to be a most comfortable hostelrie. It is situated on an elevated plateau, and afforded us a fine prospect of a portion of the valley we had lately traversed. In the garden of the inn is an ancient lime-tree, a marvel in the way of lime-trees, and said to be nearly two centuries old; it is of vast circumference, and is altogether a remarkable specimen of arboreous growth. A stream of warm mineral water running close to the roots of the tree is said to account for its great size and flourishing condition. Certainly it bears its weight of years wonderfully.

We sat out of doors that cool balmy evening watching the golden splendour of the sky and the purple shadows stealing over the valley beneath us, whilst the rest of the visitors were all indoors at *table d'hôte*, little heeding or caring for the beautiful transformation scenes that were going on outside. The west was all aglow with a soft radiance; the sun was setting behind the wooded heights amongst many ruby-tinted clouds; but his glory lingered lovingly and long upon the topmost peaks of the

grand cliffs opposite, which showed in the glowing light a rich, warm, orange tint; and here and there a solitary projecting ambitious tree caught the golden hue, standing proudly out amidst the green gloom around. The shadows of the rocks were of a tender pearly transparent grey; all the rest of the scene was in deep cool shade. Only where the river flowed far beneath us was there any warmth of tone, for here and there the waters caught and reflected the light of the rocks above; and further away, where the river formed a cascade, the murmur of which came plainly to us on the still evening air, a silvery sheen was revealed, relieving the dark gloom of the dense surrounding foliage. Looking further down the valley, the lights and shadows grew fainter and fainter. The outlines of the distant hills became more and more indistinct, till at last they melted into a mystery of azure grey; hills and woods and sky blending into one uncertain confused whole. Such was the glorious farewell to earth of the dying day. It was an impressive view we had that night of Matlock's romantic vale. Would the garish light of the morning make all appear commonplace? We almost feared to ask ourselves the question.

CHAPTER VIII.

Round about Matlock—The High Tor—A Showman's Paradise—An Amusing Encounter—Caves—The Crystallized Cavern—A Bridge swept away—Nature's Workshops—Petrifying Wells—The Cumberland Cavern—Our Guide—The English Tourist—A Wonderful Jump—Characteristic Old Bridges—Mountain Air—Crich Hill—A Geological Marvel—A Terrible Landslip—Derbyshire Villages—Romantic Scenery—Wingfield Manor—The Architects of Old—Ancient Buildings—A Grand Old Ruin.

WE were up betimes next morning, and set out at once after breakfast upon a general tour of inspection of the romantic town of Matlock and its surroundings, for romantic it is, though sadly spoilt by the builder and the inevitable tripper. The railway has both made and spoilt Matlock. In one sense it has made the place, for, owing mainly to the facilities it provides, from a small village with no pretence beyond the picturesque, Matlock has grown into quite a respectable town, and now boasts of several large hotels, hydropathic establishments, baths, museums, shops with plate-glass fronts, gas, and all the many and sundry products of modern civilization; but the peaceful, restful quiet has gone for ever. There are in reality four towns or villages spreading over altogether about two miles of ground. There is Matlock Village, with its ancient church—this is the genuine original Matlock; besides which there is Matlock Bank, of water-cure renown; Matlock Bridge,

a comparatively new growth; and finally, Matlock Bath, where the mineral waters are. It was at the Old Bath Hotel, in the latter, that Lord Byron, who was a frequent visitor here, first met Miss Chaworth, the heiress of Annesley, and here the incident occurred, as related by Moore, that eventually led to the estrangement of the two lovers.

However much altered the place may have become of late years, nothing can take away from the glory of the lion of the spot—*i.e.* the High Tor. This majestic grey crag of limestone rises boldly up from out the valley, and is an imposing and striking spectacle whencesoever viewed. The impression caused by this huge cliff does not arise altogether from its height; indeed, it is elevated only some 400 feet above the river at its foot, but its shape is dignified, stern, and eminently impressive. The upper portion of it is quite perpendicular, and it dominates the narrow vale in a lordly manner. The view from the top of the High Tor is an extensive one, but the land on the summit has been purchased by a company, who have laid it out in pleasure grounds, with walks and railings, and you have now to pay so much for the liberty of climbing up the hill. We neither paid nor climbed. The stranger cannot proceed about Matlock very far without becoming aware of the fact that, however generous Nature may have been in her gifts to the place, man has everywhere taken great care to turn those gifts to his own special pecuniary advantage. Every bit of vantage ground is religiously fenced in, and so much a head demanded for admission. The many caverns,

petrifying wells, natural curiosities are only to be viewed by parting with so much good coin of the realm. Access to the Heights of Abraham (why that strange name?) cannot be had except by payment of 6*d*., and many of the secluded walks are forbidden to the visitor except on the same terms. In fact, turn where you will, one of the chief characteristics of the place is the numerous notice boards which everywhere abound, directing you to some natural sight, curiosity, view, or walk, with the notice—admission so much.

One thing in connection with this show business afforded us considerable amusement. A bitter feud —apparent or real—exists between the various proprietors, for each one is most particular to inform you that his cavern, or whatever the sight may be, is the only one worth seeing in the place, and that all the others are nothing worth ('takes in' was the actual term used to ourselves). In fact, such a spirit of rivalry exists, that at times it is positively embarrassing to the unfortunate visitor, whom the birds of prey scent afar off, and swoop down upon, to his great discomfiture. We noticed quite a fight between two rivals for the possession of a party; eventually, to our intense delight, a third individual suddenly appeared upon the scene, and carried off the prize in triumph, leaving numbers one and two in a state of hostility that actually threatened bloodshed. We afterwards heard that the said numbers one and two patched up a diplomatic truce, and made it rather hot for number three, who, by the whole tribe of guides, cavern and curiosity pro-

prietors, was henceforth boycotted for his unprofessional conduct. Shortly afterwards, we noticed a long paragraph in the papers respecting this very affair, written, presumably, by one of the victimized visitors.

One of the chief attractions of Matlock appears to be its caverns, which everywhere abound. It is a great lead-mining country, and every old worn-out working flourishes forth, and does duty as, a grand *natural* curiosity. Two of these we were tempted to inspect, one of which, the Crystallized Cavern, as it is called, situated romantically at the foot of the High Tor, and approached by a foot-bridge over the river, is well worth seeing, and is really the only genuine one in the place. The whole of the cavern is adorned with beautiful crystallizations of calcareous spar, termed *scalon-dodecahedron*, but more popularly known as dog-tooth crystals (a much better word to describe them). These sparkle and shine in the candle-light and gas, for the latter is laid on, in a wonderful and most pleasing manner. We were highly delighted with our visit. It appears that this cavern, which is of small extent, though truly a great and most beautiful natural curiosity, is much less patronized than the others, which are chiefly, if not entirely, artificial excavations made in the search for lead ore. It would seem, therefore, that size, not beauty or rare formations, is the great desideratum for caverns. The guide is also the tenant of the place; he proved to be an intelligent and an amusing character, in which he decidedly differed from most others of his

calling. He told us he had had to build the foot-bridge which we had crossed at his own expense. The previous winter a heavy flood had swept his former bridge entirely away, and all his profits of the year with it. A portion of the ruins of the old structure were still visible in the waters beneath.

This portion of England is full of interest for both the geologist and the mineralogist. It must be remembered that the limestone measures were deposited from the seas which, æons of ages before the coal formations came into existence, covered the portion of our globe where now Great Britain stands. The stone is literally crammed with fossils of bivalve shells and other sea-fish and crustacea, besides impressions of marine plants and various extinct animals. These are easily to be observed in almost any wall that is built of limestone. We secured many fine specimens of shell-fish from that source. But, to return to the cavern, our guide showed us the crystals by means of a candle stuck on the end of a long stick—a rather primitive arrangement. In course of time, this mode of exhibiting the beauties of the place has caused the crystals to become coated with a composition of grease and smuts, which certainly does not add to the natural transparent qualities of the same. We suggested to the proprietor that he should spend the next winter, when visitors were conspicuous by their absence, and when he complained of having nothing to do, in thoroughly cleansing these. Whether he took our advice or not I cannot say, though he said most assuredly he should do so.

Our next visit was to one of the so-called petrifying wells, which, by the way, we were informed by the owner, had been patronized by nearly all the crowned heads of Europe, and most of the nobility; and, we imagined, very much by 'Arry and his companions in arms. The charge of admission is only *2d.*, so it is not a ruinous treat. Here we saw a remarkable number and extraordinary variety of articles, including birds' nests with eggs (evidently the favourite subject for experimenting upon), old hats, branches of trees, a skull, &c., undergoing the process of so-called petrifaction; that is to say, a constant dripping of moisture encrusts them with a certain hard deposit of a stony consistency, precipitated from the limestone water, from which we concluded it would not be a very wholesome liquid to drink.

On leaving the well we proceeded to the Cumberland Cavern, really a very old and extensive mine, but a natural fissure of some extent had been discovered during the excavations, and we were anxious to see this, especially as we were told there were some fine stalactites in it, and we wished as well to get some idea of what an old working was like. We had a stiff climb up the hill-side to get to the entrance, on arriving at which we sat down to regain our breath, and at the same time enjoyed the fine panorama that was spread out beneath us. Meanwhile the guide got the necessary candles, &c., ready, and when all was in order we followed him. There was not much to see. At first we groped our way down and along a dark and winding passage, scrambling here and there over damp slippery rocks,

in the course of which we managed to spill a good deal of candle-grease over ourselves. On noticing this, the guide naïvely begged us never to mind, as everybody did the same. At last we came upon a fine cavernous opening some hundred feet long and twenty wide and about the same in height, the walls of rock on either side being almost perpendicular and the roof perfectly flat like that of a room ; at the further end of this were numbers of rocks of all shapes and sizes lying about in all conceivable directions, as they must have lain for unnumbered centuries ; one, a huge mass of several tons, was supported on a mere point ; then we entered upon more narrow tunnel-like workings, until at last the guide informed us we had penetrated three quarters of a mile into the earth, and said we could go on further if we wished. But we had no such desire ; indeed, we felt we had had quite enough of it, excepting the one gallery-like cavern (which, however, of its kind was very fine) ; the rest of the place was merely a series of passages cut and blasted out of the rock in searching for ore, and one passage was very much like another ; some might possibly be a little damper than others, but that was no great attraction or recommendation. So we declined to proceed further. We felt we had done our duty in underground exploration, and so we set our faces earthwards. On returning to the spot where the rocks were strewn about, our guide ostentatiously halted, and, holding his candle first to one and then to another, he gave fanciful names to each. 'This one,' he said, 'resembles a flitch of bacon ; that over yonder a grand

"piany;" the one to the left is shaped like a porpoise,' &c. At last, however, the end came, and we were thankful for it, but not till most of the rocks had been christened. We suggested he might save himself a deal of trouble and a vast amount of breath if he would generalize matters and say the rocks all, as a rule, bore a striking resemblance to balloons—the likeness or likenesses would have been quite as correct, if not more so, and he would have spared himself the trouble of inventing portraits in stone of things on the earth and under the waters.

Whether he felt hurt at our levity, or whether a faint suspicion that we were making fun of him crossed his mind, I cannot say, but the rest of the way he was dumb, and only answered our queries in monosyllables. A Derbyshire native is very slow in comprehending a joke; in this respect he distances a Scotchman out and out. 'Strong in the arm and weak in the head' is an old saying relating to the lower class of inhabitants of this county, and there is still a grain of truth in it. Passing through the long cavern we failed to discover any stalactites where they should have been; the reason, we learnt, was that they had long ago all been broken and stolen by various visitors, the same type of creatures doubtless who cut their names and initials wherever they are able, and write them in pencil almost everywhere. *A propos* of this latter infatuation or disease, or whatever it may be, I may here mention a rather good story that was told to me as a fact, suppressing names and places. In a certain ante-hall of an old country-house, which was kindly allowed to be shown

by the owner, Messrs. Tom, Dick, and 'Arry, besides others who should have known better, had written and, alas! cut their unworthy names on the old oak panelling, some of which are (or were) most legible, giving even their owners' place of abode and date of signature. The old squire was a character, and he took his revenge in a quiet way. Over the names he had plainly carved this inscription: 'A LIST OF FOOLS.'

But I must not forget we are still in the cavern. As I have said, our guide became silent; I believe he was verily offended with us on account of our remarks, but suddenly, on nearing the place of exit, a striking change came over his manner; he was all politeness and smiles, and appeared very anxious lest we should stumble or come to grief in any way. This struck us as being very strange, not to say uncalled for, as we were nearing and walking to the light, and there was less cause for any mishap occurring there than further in; and certainly in the darkest passages where some care was requisite he had shown no special solicitude for our welfare. However, the mystery was soon explained; upon emerging out of the darkness the guide took our candles from us and said 'he hoped we would remember him.' We replied we would do our very best never to forget him; but even that did not satisfy him. He explained that what he meant was 'he hoped we would give a trifle to the guide.' 'Oh,' we replied, appearing suddenly enlightened. 'You see, sir,' he said, 'I generally a-gets something extry besides the entrance fee from the visitors; ofener

nor not I 'as a large party wat pays me better nor two like yourselves,' all the while barring the way of our exit. Seeing the inevitable, the 'extry' tip made its due appearance. The most delightful experience of this mine was the getting into the fresh open air and bright sunlight again.

We had now seen all we wished of Matlock, both above earth and under earth, and as a first detachment of trippers had made their unwelcome appearance, we felt it was about time to beat a retreat, before the main body of the army arrived.

Out of Matlock for about half a mile we retraced our road as far as Cromford. Here we turned to the left over an ancient stone bridge, the arch of which repeats itself in the water beneath. On the parapet of this old structure is cut an inscription (not a very clear one, however), which we afterwards learned recorded the feat of a certain horse who, with its rider, leaped over the side into the meadow or stream below, without, however, hurt to either. It was certainly a wonderful jump, and it is marvellous how no bones were broken or a worse mishap did not occur. We could not discover whether the horse took fright or the man was drunk, or if it was simply a mad freak. We could hardly imagine anyone in his right senses deliberately attempting such a thing; a broken neck would, we imagined, be the inevitable result of such a mad proceeding. However, there appears to be a special providence that watches over fools and drunken men, otherwise we should hear of more catastrophes to such.

From this bridge we had a few miles of level

road, a rather rare luxury in such a hilly county as Derbyshire; to the left of us rose up wooded hills, fir crowned, upon whose sides comfortable-looking homes and cottages appeared snugly ensconced in masses of greenery; to the right of us glided along, with a soothing, musical murmuring, the beautiful Derwent, shining and glistening through the trees that bounded our road like a streak of molten silver. On the opposite side of the valley were more wooded hills, with trees flourishing bravely to their very summits. Our excellent stretch of road, as all good things do, came to an end in time, and it suddenly commenced to ascend. Now, when a road in Derbyshire begins to mount, as a rule, it does mount and no mistake about it, and you have to make up your mind for stiff climbing. Right up the side of the hill we went, and the more we rose the steeper the gradient appeared; from time to time we had to come to a stop, and had to rest our steeds by pulling up right across the track. As we ascended, by degrees the foliage, which at first was so luxuriant as to shut out all view, became less and less dense, the woods were less closely connected, and through openings here and there we caught glances of the azure distance beyond, looking very tender and soft owing to the sudden contrast with objects so close at hand.

The higher we rose the more bracing and invigorating became the air, the horizon grew up before us, and the landscape, now visible for miles around, spread out beneath us a glorious expanse of woodland, hill, and dale, stretching far away till lost in

the dreamy distant blue, where hills and sky blended together in the uncertain haze. At last we reached a height where no trees interrupted either the view or the air. On these breezy uplands how delightfully cool and light appears the atmosphere! There was no land higher than we were for miles around, so there was nothing to intercept the rolling waves of air; they came at first from off the sea, and swept over the land unimpeded in their course till they reached us, pure and fresh, tonic-laden, and life-giving. There is nothing in the whole Pharmacopœia so powerful a remedy for dyspepsia and the hundred and one ailments flesh is heir to as mountain air; such, in England at least, is always combined to a certain extent with the ozone of the sea. There are some advantages in living in a small island.

Some six miles or so from Matlock we passed along the side of Crich Hill, one of the most interesting geographical features in the kingdom. Here strata overlie strata of different formations; first of all on the top comes limestone, next clay, then millstone grit, and lastly, congealed lava, proving beyond doubt the volcanic origin of this strange hill. And what a sight we beheld as we passed over the hill! Some dozen or more acres of land had bodily slipped down towards the valley, owing doubtless to the sharp dip of the strata, forming a confused mass of ridges, fissures and chasms, and taking with them a good portion of the road. Here a temporary track had been made joining the two ends of the dissevered old way. Over this we had to drive carefully, for it was very rough and uneven, and as we

drove along, we wondered, if another such a gigantic slip should then take place, where it would land us; such an event did not seem impossible by any means, and doubtless in time, now the work of moving has begun on such a grand scale, other minor displacements will some day, sooner or later, take place. Houses and cottages were destroyed and damaged by this tremendous landslip; in fact, quite a respectable earthquake would hardly have done more damage. When I was travelling in California some years ago, whilst staying on a visit at Calistoga Hot Springs, a volcanic part of the world, a small earthquake actually took place, without doing a tithe of the damage.

There is one thing about a limestone country, however beautiful the scenery may be, the roads are a terrible drawback. In fine weather they are disagreeably dusty, and their whiteness is very glaring and trying to the eyes. After rain and in the winter the limestone gets ground down into a kind of most adhesive mortar, unpleasant to walk or drive over, as it sticks to everything it touches with a pertinacity worthy of a better cause.

Derbyshire moorland villages are bare and uninteresting-looking; the houses are built of cold grey stone. They are, as a rule, square, plain structures entirely devoid of the picturesque; no creepers adorn their walls, which, however, are thick and substantial. The pigsty too often takes the place of the garden. Is the pig 'the gentleman that pays the rent' here as in Ireland, I wonder? However, their interiors, from the glance or two we caught, appeared comfort-

able and clean. Poverty there might be, but not dirt or squalor. The children we saw were running about wild, with tangled hair, shabby clothes, but possessing healthy-looking and ruddy complexions, and appeared to be enjoying their existence immensely. If not beautiful, these elevated hamlets are at any rate healthy ; they glory in an abundance of the purest air, almost too much of it in the winter one would imagine, and the water of the moorland springs and streams is beyond suspicion.

Our road now began to descend, just before which we had a charming view of the Derwent Valley; the cloud shadows travelling quickly over it, now one part was all in gloom, anon it rejoiced in the golden sunlight, the shadow and the sunshine leading the eye along from beauty spot to beauty spot. It was a fair sight, and more like a dream of scenery than a reality—an artist's ideal, than a bit of actual landscape. We endeavoured to make a sketch of it, but so poor appeared our attempt to the living prospect, that we tore it up in disgust. Distant views, however beautiful, rarely make pleasing pictures, and the more extended and varied the panorama, the more difficult it is to do anything with it. Exactly the reason of this it is hard to say, but it is a very patent fact. Only once have I ever seen a really successful delineation of a large extent of landscape as viewed from a height.

As we descended the country became wooded again and assumed once more a pastoral aspect. Presently a turn in the road revealed to us the old, grey, time-worn towers, shattered turrets, and mighty

gables of Wingfield Manor peeping above a dense mass of trees, and standing out in strong relief against the sheen of the summer sky, its hoary old walls contrasting strangely with the bright fresh green of the foliage around. The irregular diversified outline of this ruin is very effective, and forms a most pleasing picture when viewed from a short distance away. Here we pulled up, and alighting from our carriage we wandered along a footpath in the direction of the old pile. We met no one; the only sign of life was some cattle contentedly munching the grass, and who looked up curiously as we passed, then resumed their operations and took no more notice of us.

Wingfield Manor is a most interesting old ruin; it is more of a princely residence, secured by strong battlemented walls against a sudden attack, than a castle pure and simple, though it possesses a massive square keep—a place fortified for an occasional emergency, sufficiently so indeed to enable it to withstand a short siege. It is a happy and somewhat rare combination of military and domestic architecture, being built both for enjoyment and defence. To a limited extent it possesses the strength of an old feudal castle with the conveniences of a private residence; it is a stepping-stone between the old Norman stronghold and such mansions as Haddon and Hardwick Halls, Knole House, Cowdray, and countless others. As we approached the old relic of bygone times, it stood up before us silent and proud, holding a great power over our imaginations.

A portion of the building is converted into a farm-house; we saw no one about, but as a matter of courtesy we knocked at the door and asked permission to look over the place, which was at once granted. The ruins, which are situated on a rising knoll and command the country all around, are very extensive; the plan of the building in its present condition is somewhat difficult to understand, but we let our fancies have full play and endeavoured as far as possible to recall to ourselves how it was in the past. The old banqueting-hall was not hard to discover, and a grand apartment it must have been, measuring as it does, roughly (we only gathered the size by stepping it), some eighty feet long by nearly forty broad. It is roofless now and floored with coarse grass; ivy covers the walls that once were adorned with heavy tapestry; its windows are all gone (though a hundred years ago many remained glazed), only crumbling, grey-green mullions and transoms at present are left; trailing creepers cover the vacant spaces once filled with richly stained-glass—through which transparent greenery the sun gleams with a soft yellow tint. The hall, which echoed with the sound of wassail and of merry jest, which blazed with lights and rung with the sounds of revelry, is strangely silent and deserted now. No, not quite deserted; peaceful sheep are unconcernedly feeding within the very walls where of old noble baron and gallant knight were wont to feast; and above, the rooks are holding high and noisy festival—wheeling in and out the while of the moss-covered, time-rent, mouldering

edifice. The desolation is, after all, not so great as it at first appeared. But, for all that, there came over us a melancholy feeling of untold sadness and loneliness as we stood there amidst those ancient ruined walls, the sight of which carried one back in imagination to the olden days. The long dank grass and tangled briars flourished in all the neglected courts and passages. And as we looked around we sighed for what was not; we would have had, just for a few brief moments, the old place restored to all its glory; and antique dames with their quaint costumes, and the brave and courtly knights, reinhabit the stately halls once more.

The architect of Wingfield Manor, what a genius was he! and yet his very name is all unknown, but his works here tell us what manner of man he was. Would this nineteenth century could rear such artists! England, in the golden days (architecturally speaking) of the long ago, produced great men who raised up glorious edifices, as did their fathers before them, as many a fine old cathedral, noble abbey, stern castle, and stately hall remain to tell. They expressed in their buildings the grandeur of their minds, and reflected in them the greatness of the state. How is it we do not produce the like now? Is it because we cannot, or is it because we will not? Have we not in the present day, in the hurry and race for mere wealth, in the slavish attempt in getting the most for our money, killed or lost much that was noble and great in our ancestors? Great and noble buildings must come from great and noble minds. *Ex nihilo nihil fit.* But some may say, we

have erected of late many grand buildings. Well, they are grand—that is to say, they certainly have size, but that is all; their grandeur, however, and the grandeur of, say, Hatfield House, is a very different thing; beauty is not their birthright, feelingless and cold are they, and dead to arouse one exalted thought or deed. One old pile, such as Haddon, or Knole, or Speke Hall, not to mention any cathedral or abbey, is worth all the rubbish we have tormented mother earth with for the last two centuries or so. It appears to me the Commonwealth effectually killed all art in England.

Such thoughts as these ran through our minds as we wandered over the picturesque ruins of this old manor. The building is a picture from wherever viewed; it is a poem in stones and mortar, and a grand poem too, with its mighty buttresses, great gables, quaintly-shaped windows, ample chimneys, curious gateways, groined roofs, and commanding keep—strength and beauty, massiveness and grace, fortress and palace, in rarest manner combined.

Beneath the banqueting-hall is a grand apartment with a fine groined roof of bold vaulting ribs, and a twin row of substantial pillars to support it. This is now all damp and gloomy, dark and eerie; our footsteps re-echoed strangely from the solid walls around and overhead. The effect of light and shade was Rembrandt-like, the dim, misty shadows falling about in a weird, ghostly manner; and beyond, the background was a mystery of darkness. It was not a lively spot even on that genial summer noon, and it took fully five minutes of the bright

sunshine to lift the gloom of that vault-like chamber from off our spirits. We were glad to leave it, and for a thorough change we climbed the old tower, the steps being still intact and in capital preservation, and took a look round about upon the glorious sunlit country that lay beneath our feet.

Wingfield Manor possesses the stereotyped history of nearly all such similar strongholds. It was here that one Babington planned a conspiracy for the liberation of Mary Queen of Scots, who was kept a prisoner here, which, however, resulted only in the plotter losing his head, and the unfortunate captive being more closely watched than ever; rather a poor ending for so grand a scheme.

Much as Wingfield Manor has suffered at the hands of time and Cromwell, those two great destroyers of English castles, yet since the latter's time the hand of man has wrought more havoc with these ruins than the storms of long years, or the natural crumbling process of decay, for they have been used as a quarry to supply stones to build an ugly house in the valley. 'To what base uses' may not even old castles come!

CHAPTER IX.

Hardwick Hall—Mines—An Old Distich—A Many-windowed House—Bess of Hardwick—A Very Much Married Lady—A Poor Consolation—Building Bess—An Old Country—Tradition at Fault—Guide-books and their Writers—An Old-world Home—Interior of Hardwick—Ancient Furniture—A Bit of the Black Country—Chesterfield—Our Forefathers and Ourselves—Sheffield—Disagreeable Driving—A Wonderful Town—An Artificial Volcano—'Far from the Madding Crowd'—A Hill Stream—Landscapes, Ideal and Real.

FROM Wingfield Manor we proceeded to another old-world home, Hardwick Hall, equally as fine as Wingfield, if not so extensive a building, but retaining all its ancient glory, and, unlike the unfortunate manor, not a ruin. On our way we passed one or two large collieries with their engines busily at work, surrounded by black heaps of coal and dross, making hideous dark scars upon the otherwise fair landscape. They were a sad eye-sore to us, but still out of the very evil some good came—the gaunt offensiveness of the pits served in some measure as a foil to enhance the loveliness of the country around. On arriving at the park of Hardwick we discovered, close to the gates of the same, a quaint, old-fashioned-looking hotel, the first glance of which so pleased us with its quiet restful look that we at once decided if possible to spend the night here, in order to wander about this lovely spot, and make some sketches of the place.

But romantic-looking though the inn appeared from the outside, we concluded after an internal survey we would not venture to sleep there. The appointments of the place were somewhat rough, and the rooms they showed us had not at all a comfortable or an inviting look. It was decidedly a case of the outside of the cup and platter. The hall is situated upon a commanding eminence in a well-timbered park, in which grand old gnarled oaks abound; it is a splendid specimen of an old English mansion raised in that golden age of English domestic architecture, the Elizabethan period. This imposing and magnificent structure, with its beautiful proportions and unity of design, cannot but fail to at once strike and impress the beholder. There is an old distich which tersely says :—

Hardwicke Hall,
More glass than wall.

And Lord Bacon, when on a visit there, wrote, 'One cannot tell where to become to be out of the sunne.' Our ancestors, by the way, generally spoke of their country as 'sunny England.' Truly the windows of this superb mansion are both numerous and ample, and as we approached it I shall never forget the effect of so much glass reflecting in a thousand tints the sunlight—it was simply gorgeous. The numerous diamond panes, each glistening on its own account, formed a glittering whole as of countless jewels, in a setting of sombre grey stonework. But, in spite of many adverse remarks, I think the architect knew very well what he was

about when he planned the windows thus; they are indeed walls of light. Yet internally we did not feel they were at all too large; in judging of the merits or demerits of these, critics appear to have forgotten that the large stone mullions, transoms and quarrelled leaded lights take up a good deal of the space, and consequently intercept an appreciable amount of light. These windows, it must be remembered, are not mere square vacant holes in the walls, filled in with plate-glass which the modern builder so delighteth in, and which make you feel almost as if you were sitting out of doors. Having got our modern plate-glass windows, we at once acknowledge their bareness by hiding them with curtains, both silk and lace. Plate-glass has many sins to answer for; like fire, it is a good servant but a bad master, and it has mastered the modern architect.

Hardwick Hall was erected by the notorious Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury, known in old times by the nickname of 'Bess of Hardwicke,' a wonderful woman in her day and a great favourite of her masculine namesake Queen Elizabeth. She was a most imperious and business-like woman, and had a *penchant* for matrimony and a perfect mania for building. She took to herself no less than four husbands, and in each case the mare was master (or mistress, whichever is the correct expression) of the team, the last and most henpecked being the Earl of Shrewsbury, whose life she made such a burden to him that he actually complained to the Queen that he had been reduced to the condition of a 'pencyoner.' Needless to say he gained nothing

by his unmanly complaints, for we actually find him writing, in a letter dated April ye 5th, 1585, to the famous Earl of Leicester, 'the Queene hathe taken the part of my wief, and hathe sette downe this hard sentence agaynst me, to my perpetual infamy and dishonour, to be rulled and overaune by her, so bad and wicked a woman.' The only consolation from his friends he got was from the Bishop of Lichfield, whose wife he (the bishop) acknowledged was a 'sharpe and bitter shrewe, yet that if shrewdness or sharpnesse may be a just cause of separacion betweene a man and his wiefe, I thinke fewe men in Englande woulde keepe their wiefs longe.'

This grand pile of Hardwick was begun in the year 1576, and finished some time prior to 1600; it was built of stone quarried from the rock on which it stands. It may seem strange to call a hoary old mansion like this, that has existed nearly three centuries, modern; but so it was spoken of to us to distinguish it from the adjacent ruins of the old hall, which stand mournfully close by. Such a remark speaks more than volumes of writing possibly could of the antiquity of our fatherland, of the long and storied past, leading one in imagination away to the far-off mystic days of old romance. The stately English homes of our ancestors are a part and parcel of the history of a great and noble past. Picturesquely speaking, Hardwick is a perfect building, as are most of the fine mansions erected in the Elizabethan age. It is national also, and reflects the glories of the period. With all its grandeur Hardwick is suggestive of rest and calm and of domestic comfort,



HARDWICK OLD HALL.

all of which combined we may seek for in vain in any other style or any other age of architecture. Classical work has certainly grandeur enough and to spare, but it hardly gives to one the idea of being suitable either to the home-like life of the sturdy Englishman or to the English landscape. The style is not agreeable to England; it is like a foreigner abroad, and looks what it is—out of place.

No old English mansion appears to be historically complete without some connection with the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, and so at Hardwick there are rooms shown which she is stated to have occupied when imprisoned there. I had often wondered whether she had really inhabited all the many rooms we had been shown in the course of our numerous journeys, and told she had so done. One thing is very certain. If she did all the needlework attributed to her she must have done nothing but stitch, stitch, stitch from morning till night all her life, and which is hardly probable. Unfortunately for tradition in this case, as in many other similar ones—notably the tiny, and on that account improbable, room shown in the Eagle Tower[1] at Carnarvon Castle as the one in which the first (Saxon) Prince of Wales was born—the respective buildings were not actually erected till after the events happened which are said to have taken place in them. In fact, Hardwick Hall was not commenced till after the Scottish queen's execution.

[1] I am speaking of the Eagle Tower alone, not of the Castle as a whole, which at that date was, with the exception of the aforesaid tower, nearly completed.

Upon entering Hardwick we felt, as the doors closed upon us, as though we had suddenly stepped back some three centuries ; the spirit of the past held us in bondage. The nineteenth century, with all its bustle and restless activity, its running to and fro, seemed more a heated imagination of our brain than an actual reality, so great an impression did this old-world house make upon us. Hardwick is a place to dream in ; associations of the past speak to you from its walls and from all within ; the quaint, substantial furniture, the Tudor chairs, the ancient tapestry (some from Beauvais, and bearing date of 1428), the curious cabinets so cunningly carved and inlaid, the old dark oak panelling, the gleam of the antique armour upon the same, the old portraits of past generations in their peculiar and picturesque costumes and dresses, enclosed in old-fashioned black frames, are all suggestive of bygone times and bygone people. I am not about to give a description of the interior of the place and of all we saw therein. I am not writing a guide-book, nor have I the slightest ambition ever to do so. Indeed, if I would give particulars of all we saw I could not. As I have said, Hardwick is a place to dream in, and we wandered about the old chambers, up and down the wide staircases and along the numerous passages and galleries in a delightful visionary state ; a feeling came over us, that was hard to repress, even had we so desired, that what we saw was scarcely real, and 'things were not what they seemed.' For a brief time we lived in an enchanted land of romance, and we were in no hurry to wake

out of our trance. Why should we be? We took away with us a delicious memory, a dreamy impression of this grand old-world home, a precious recollection that was ours for ever. For long afterwards Hardwick haunted us; we live in the hope of some day going over once again that glorious old relic of the past, to renew our dreamy wanderings over its tapestried chambers, its courts and halls. An old home like this—lived in and kept up as it was in our great forefathers' time, of glorious memory—is a priceless treasure.

> I have seen
> Old houses where the men of former time
> Have lived and died, so wantonly destroyed
> By their descendants, that a place like this,
> Preserved with pious care, but not 'restored'
> By rude presumptuous hands, nor modernised
> To suit convenience, seems a precious thing.

The view from the hall is very fine; hill and dale, wooded height beyond wooded height stretch far away, green at first, then in the middle distance grey, fading as they recede into hazy blue, till at last their outlines vaguely mingle with the sky—a wide, boundless expanse, over which the eye wanders in delightful freedom. But mingled with so much beauty, it must be confessed, here and there the tall chimneys and the uprising smoke of busy collieries proclaim themselves; though they cannot be said to actually spoil the landscape, still they strike a chord not in harmony with the scene. We felt it hard to tear ourselves away from this entrancing spot; nature, art, and time have all done their best to beautify, mellow, and hallow it, and for an excuse

to linger a little longer there we wandered about the ancient gardens, full of bright and sweet old-fashioned flowers. But the time came at last for us to take our departure, and we took one long farewell glance at the hoary old pile whose walls were all tinted and gilded by the slanting rays of the sun, its numerous windows, flashing back the golden light, appearing like so many mighty yellow diamonds. Farewell, Hardwick, it was a glorious good-bye you bade us! Farewell, thou dear relic of bygone days! May nothing ever deprive thee of thy old-world calmness; may no modern innovations ever jar upon thy delightful, restful harmony!

From Hardwick we drove to Sheffield, passing through Chesterfield *en route*. Places better calculated there could not be to rudely awaken us out of our delightful dreams of legends and romance. Chesterfield soon took all the poetry out of us; the present—ugly, common-place present—weighed heavily upon our souls. We felt depressed, and a sudden sadness came over us. From the golden glories of romantic Hardwick to the blackness and dirt of Chesterfield was a dreadful descent. The contrast caused the meanness of our times to come upon us with double force.

We reached Sheffield late that evening, and we left it early—very early—the next morning. So we did not see much of the town; but what little we saw more than sufficed us. The transition from the pure, fresh, fragrant country air to that which does duty for an atmosphere in this town of blackness was too much for us; we felt we could scarcely

breathe. It had been raining before we arrived. The wet by no means improved the look of things. The fine golden sunset showed a wan, pale yellow through the smoke; the wet streets reflected this hue, and that was all the colour there was. All the rest was a homogeneous, pitiful, cheerless grey, save where here and there a vivid ray of fervid, glowing red was momentarily thrown out from some furnace across the road. The damp air held the smoke in bondage. It seemed not like ordinary smoke; it absolutely refused to rise. The tall chimneys belched forth dark clouds of matter more resembling black tow than anything else earthly, a something that would not ascend but that hung over the town like a mighty pall. Fortunately, ugly as it is, what with the smoke and fog and narrow winding streets, you cannot see much of Sheffield at a time. Your feelings are so far spared, your view is decidedly limited, and it is a good thing it is.

What a drive we had into the town! The streets were certainly narrow enough (and crooked enough) without huge tramcars monopolizing the best of the way. Nor was there any reason, as far as we could discover, why the people should elect to walk along the roads instead of on the foot-pavement. We had one or two narrow shaves with large trucks and trollies laden with iron and manufactured goods, which were driven along anyhow and at a reckless pace. The hissing of steam on all sides, the din of countless hammers, the screeching of revolving saws cutting through solid iron plates, the roar of blast furnaces, the crash, crash, thump, thump of

moving machinery, the grating sound of grinding wheels everywhere busily at work, made the place appear to us as we drove along like a perfect Pandemonium. It was very evident we had no business there; it was not a place after our own heart. We had simply fixed on the spot in the hurry of the moment as a convenient stage, with a vague idea that it might perhaps interest us. And now, before we had even reached our hotel, we had told our man to be prepared to start early in the morning, wet or fine —aye, even though it were a thunderstorm. The height of our present desire was to get out of all this smoke, sulphurous vapours, everlasting whirl and noise, and oppressive gloom, right away once more into the green, sunlit country. Have I drawn the picture too black? Very possibly; but I have simply painted it as we felt it. But in case my remarks may be deemed prejudiced or strained to the utmost, let me quote the description of this town by Charles Reade:—'Hillsborough' (Sheffield being understood), 'though built on one of the loveliest sites in England, is perhaps the most hideous town in creation. The city bristles with high round chimneys. They defy the law, and belch forth massive volumes of black smoke that hang like acres of crape over the place, and veil the sun and the blue sky even on the brightest day. More than one crystal stream runs sparkling down the valley and enters the town; but they soon get defiled and creep through it heavily charged with nastiness, clogged with putridity and bubbling with poisonous gases, till at last they turn to mere ink, stink, and malaria,

and people the churchyards as they crawl. This infernal city, whose water is blacking and whose air is coal, lies in a basin of delight and beauty: noble slopes, broad valleys watered by rivers and brooks of singular beauty, and fringed by fair woods.' After this my description reads tame, and I can scarcely be accused of being too severe.

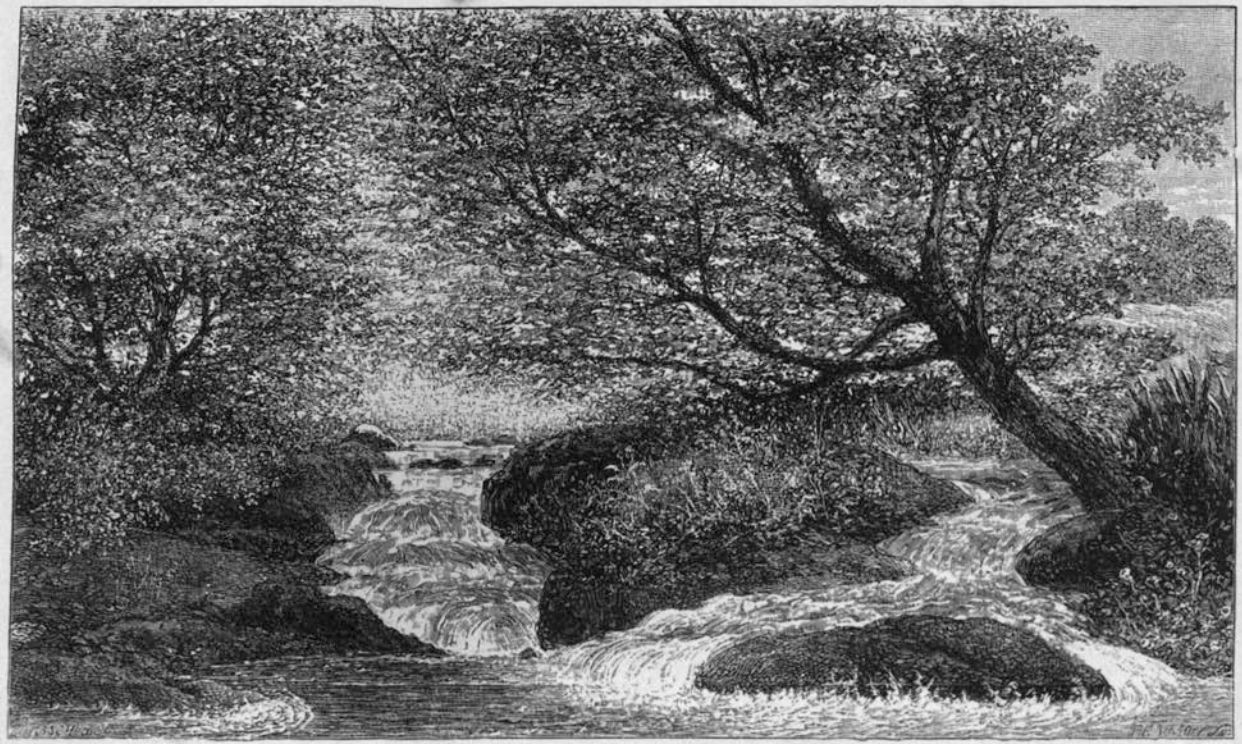
But with all its blackness and smoke Sheffield is a wonderful town. Are you travelling by rail in far-off India, America, Australia, &c.? If so, the chances are you are rolling over Sheffield rails. Wherever you may eat your dinner Sheffield cutlery is probably at your side. Are you voyaging in one of the splendid modern mail steamers? Sheffield almost certainly provided the plates for the same. Are you watching the ingathering of the harvest in some foreign country? The scythes employed, it is a hundred to one, came from Sheffield; and so this town follows you everywhere.

Though such a gruesome place, Sheffield is surrounded by a most glorious moorland country; and when, next day, we had reached the breezy uplands, we felt joyous and light-hearted once more; only a feeling of pity remained for those whom fate or necessity compelled to live in such a spot. Were I a poor man I would rather live upon the proverbial crust of bread and cheese, and breathe the wholesome country air and have its ever-varying beauties around me, than I would feast in such a capital of blackness.

We began to mount at once on leaving the town, and at the top of the hill we pulled up and turned

round to inspect the scene. Surrounded by an amphitheatre of hills, in the hollow formed by them, again we saw Sheffield (or rather the spot where the town was, for the noisome vapour most effectually hid all the buildings) sending up volumes of lurid smoke, and flames from its furnaces showed now and again. It was as though we were looking down upon the gigantic crater of some mighty volcano, and that was our last view of the famous town. We could not but help feeling what a beautiful spot Sheffield would be if only Sheffield were not there; or, if that is too Irish a way of putting it, what a beautiful country it must have been before the once rural village became the metropolis of coal and iron.

'Far from the madding crowd' once more—and a very madding crowd we thought it—how doubly peaceful and quiet seemed the country! By quiet I do not mean silence—far from it; for upon the balmy summer breezes came to us many and frequent rural sounds; but the sounds were restful ones, and were, indeed, necessary to emphasize the silence. Around us was a mingled harmony—a humming of wandering bees and a buzzing of many insects; the winds wooing the branches of the trees overhead made a soothing rustling—a peculiar murmuring indescribable in words. Strangely enough, though there were several in sight, we had no bird music, generally everywhere in England so plentiful and delightful. This was a mystery to us. From afar off came, in a melodious blending, the bleating of sheep upon the distant moors, together



A WAYSIDE BURN.

with the dreamy tinkling of their bells from the low-land pasturages. Also came to us every now and again the lowing of the kine and the shouting of the shepherd to his dog, and close at hand a little burn, half hidden by ferns, babbled and chattered in a never-ending manner,

> Making sweet music with th' enamelled stones,

as it prattled along its pebbly bed, threading its way among a mass of mossy rocks. It came down straight from the heathery moorlands, channelling its way down the hill-side till it joined the river in the vale beneath and was lost in the golden flood below. It was a coy and shy streamlet, one that had to be sought after; its beauties were not for the vulgar crowd. But we knew where to look; it could not hide itself from us, and we caught here and there the silvery gleam of its waters through an intricacy of leaves and of bracken and of tangled briars. So reposeful was the scene, so opposed to the dinsome city's turmoil, that we could not resist the temptation to dismount, and, sitting upon an old grey lichen-stained rock by the side of the little stream, we were almost hushed to sleep by its lullaby. Is there anything in nature, I wonder, so restful as the music of falling water? Around us were flowers and ferns, and gaudy dragon and gay butterflies passed and repassed us. On the banks above some wild thyme made the air fragrant with its refreshing perfume, and through the woods we caught glimpses of the distant sunlit country; the hillsides were all bathed in soft sunshine, the golden

light playing about their russet-green slopes, the passing clouds causing shadows to chase each other across them. Beyond these, stretching far away, were the grey and purple moorlands, a moment dark and sombre as a trail of shadow passed over them, and anon they were all a purple glory as a gleam of sunshine traversed their heather-clad tops.

We were amused, too, by watching a squirrel, who, startled at our first appearance, came halfway down his tree to investigate us, and as we did not prove so very dreadful in his eyes, and kept quiet, he took heart of grace and came altogether down, and wandered about the ground evidently in search of nuts, and in time he came so close to us we could almost have touched him. Then he got hold of what appeared to be a young chestnut, and taking it in his forepaws he sat gravely down in front of us and enjoyed his meal, and at last, when he had quite finished it (it took him nearly ten minutes), and not before, he went his way and we went ours. A trifling incident not worth relating, perhaps you will say, but it is just all these inconsidered trifles that go to make up the many and varying interests of each day in the country, and in inanimate nature, as well from the lowly, simple daisy so often trod under foot, to the mighty, storm-rent mountain, there is endless matter for food and delight to the true lover of nature. To him no yard of the country is or could be dull, no spot without its special beauties and charms. A lonely moorland (perhaps the most desolate scenery we have) is not a desolate or

dreary spot to him who has eyes to use and knows how to employ them.

Our road to-day passed through the Wharncliffe woods and close to Wharncliffe Lodge, the view from which spot is both very extensive and beautiful. Lady Montagu, writing of Avignon, and speaking of the landscape there as viewed from the castle-crowned heights of the popes, said it was 'the most lovely land prospect she ever saw except that from Wharncliffe.' After this remark, perhaps I had better say nothing; I might write pages without doing justice to the panorama. The imagination can often paint, when left free to itself (or only a brief outline supplied), far finer landscapes than the pen can portray. If only sometimes we could turn imagination into reality, the conception of the poet-artist into a real living landscape, what a beautiful world this would be!

CHAPTER X.

Penistone—A Desolate Village—A Hunt for the Landlord—A Cheerless Country—A Vast Solitude—A Sea of Moors—Mountain and Moorland Air—Huddersfield—Nature's Recreation Grounds—A Country of Towns—Sunshine and Shower—Halifax—Travellers' Tales—Gibbet Law—A Thieves' Litany—A Steep Road—Wreathing Mists—Difficult Steering—A Hailstorm—A Purple Sea—Curious Boulders—A Sphinx—Keighley—Skipton Town and Castle—The Shepherd Lord—Changing Scenery—An *al fresco* Lunch—Settle—An Ebbing and Flowing Well—Unfortunate Tourists—Clapham—Pine Forests.

OUR mid-day halt was at Penistone, a desolate village situated high up in the world and surrounded by dreary moorlands. Here we found an inn almost as desolate as the place itself. We drove up to what appeared to be the principal doorway of this forsaken hotel, but could discover no one about. Then we entered the stable-yard and sought for the ostler, but there was nobody visible. Presently, however, we managed to unearth the landlord from out of some outbuildings, where he was amusing himself chopping up wood, or with some such occupation. He appeared exceedingly surprised to see us, for he said they never did any business or had any visitors except on one day a week (Thursday I think he said), which was a market day. In the evenings he had a few customers, inhabitants of the place, who dropped in for their pipe and glass and a chat, and that was all. Moreover, he said, no one

now travelled by road if they could help it in these parts, as they (the roads) were very desolate and hilly; therefore, there was some excuse for his look of astonishment in seeing us with a phaeton and pair in cool possession of his deserted stable-yard. When, however, he had recovered from his surprise and comprehended the situation, he at once set to work to help us and to offer us what hospitalities the limited resources of his inn could afford. He showed us into a barely-furnished room, and a scrubby-looking servant appeared in due course; and eventually we procured a rough-and-ready meal, which, however, our long drive through the bracing air caused us to appreciate more than we otherwise should.

The country round about Penistone is of the most wild and cheerless description; bleak, barren moorlands succeed one another in a confused, chaotic outline, swept unrestrained by the winds of heaven. What a spot this must be in the winter time, when the north-easter is raging unchecked in its fury, and the snowstorm drives across this wild tract in unabated vigour. The traveller who ventured by road in such times might almost as well be traversing the wilds of Siberia; he could hardly be worse off. Even now in midsummer—warm as it was on the lower ground—it was quite cool up here, too much so indeed for our enjoyment; in fact we wondered if it could ever be really warm in this elevated region. Immediately around the village small quantities of land have been tilled, and a brave attempt has been made to bring it under cultivation;

some few crops make a desperate struggle for existence, as we had evidence by their stunted growth. We judged, however, the only thing Penistone could boast of in perfection was the air, of which there was certainly an unlimited supply, of the purest and most bracing quality. Anyhow, the land about is hardly of that class 'that you tickle with a plough and it laughs at you with a harvest.'

In the afternoon we proceeded on our way. Our road now became very wild, traversing as it did the bleak, peaty, swampy moorlands. We had nothing but a vast expanse of barren land around and a grey clouded sky overhead; the intense loneliness and stillness of this far-reaching solitude was almost depressing. There was hardly a sign of life; not a solitary sheep, not even a wandering bird did we see, only once a startled grouse flew past us with a sudden whir-r-r-r, and that was all. But in spite of the loneliness we mightily enjoyed the drive. The air was most exhilarating and bracing, and it sent the blood coursing through our veins, infusing new life into our bodies. Moorland air is a sort of natural champagne, only there is this difference in it—you may indulge in any amount of it without the fear of after consequences, save an alarming appetite.

By degrees we discovered the moors were not so barren or monotonous after all. Heather and gorse in bloom were visible here and there, and bright yellow mosses and bilberry plants flourished everywhere, with their delicate green leaves and purple wine-stained fruit; and now and again a damp rock or a peaty pool, as it caught the light,

shone out brightly from the dark gloom around. The varying tones and colours of this vast undulating sea of moors were a study in themselves—sombre in places, rich in others, and actually gay where the glinting sunlight caught the bright yellow of the gorse and the glorious purple of the heather. No one can say the moors are colourless or melancholy who has studied or observed them much. What had appeared to us at first all cheerless and gloomy, upon closer acquaintance we found exulted in a thousand hues; the colouring was low in tone certainly, as suited the scene, but it was by no means wanting in subdued harmonies, which latter are always more pleasing to the educated eye than severe contrasts, though perhaps not at first so telling. At the same time, from the brightness of the heather and gorse to the powerful darkness of the peaty soil, the range of colour and light and shade were by no means limited.

Our road was an ambitious one. Higher and higher it ascended, till it appeared we were surely approaching the end of the world, and that when we reached the summit of the far-stretching moor—away yonder where it seemed to join the sky—we should simply look over into space; but when at last that height was gained, we found the world extended many a league beyond. Before us was a prospect that involuntarily called forth our admiration. First came russet moors, then dark blue hills beyond hills, the more distant ones being lost in a dreamy dimness or hidden by a veil of low-lying clouds that stretched across the horizon. There

was just a suspicion of a warm yellow in the West, where the sun was sinking low, and a corresponding tint from sundry pools in the near foreground—which shone forth like burnished gold—lighting up the landscape as the eye does the human face. Down, far down in the valley were woods and villages mingled together in a shadowy indistinctness, and mists, too, were gathering in the hollows and were gradually creeping up the hillsides; and winding away below us we could trace our road for miles—a trail of light grey till lost in a mystery of haze and gloom in the distant dale. Down the hill we went at a famous pace, the leather of the brakes being almost worn away in the rapid run. How delightful was the swift, easy motion through the light, invigorating air!—we had in our drive a perfect atmospheric bath. Fresh mountain or moorland air excels all other tonics, and it is the most lasting in its effects. Dame Nature is the best and pleasantest of doctors, and in the end the least expensive, only, alas! too often we do not consult her in time.

Huddersfield, our night's destination, was reached at a late hour, and here we found a capital hotel and excellent 'accommodation for man and beast,' and the mankind took the opportunity of indulging in a good dinner, which, being well cooked, and washed down by some sound, if not expensive, wine, was fully appreciated after the long and appetizing drive. As we drove into the town, we could not help contrasting the busy life and glare of the city with the silent and lonely expanse of moorland we had so recently left behind. These spacious solitudes—

Nature's ready-made recreation grounds—are so near the teeming hives of modern industries, and yet so far; within a drive, a walk even for the stout pedestrian, and yet trod by few.

Huddersfield is a stone-built town, and, after the blackness of Sheffield, appeared to us a remarkably clean one, although a large manufacturing place. Woollen and cloth mills are superior to coal and iron works in point of cleanliness.

The next morning turned out wet—a regular drencher—and it was not till the afternoon it cleared up sufficiently to enable us to start. For a time the grey leaden clouds parted, and patches of bright blue sky showed themselves, and gleams of sunshine came and went in a fitful manner. The weather was not much to boast of, but it did not actually rain; and, as we were tired of Huddersfield, we determined, upon the first suspicion of sunshine, to start.

We were now in a country abounding on all sides with busy towns; this part of Yorkshire is well supplied with coal fields, and where the coal is there do the manufacturers congregate. Our map was dotted all over with the names of various factory towns more or less noted, and, go which way we would, we could not escape them, so we selected the road that led in the most direct line through this industrious district, that we might have as little ugliness as possible. The road on to Halifax was a very hilly one, and not devoid of beauty, though some of the villages on the way were spoilt by having large mills erected in their midst, which quite dwarfed the rest of the buildings in the place,

and looked sadly out of place with their surroundings. We had a wet drive; no sooner had we fairly started than it recommenced to rain; patter, patter, patter, it began gently at first, then it commenced to pit, pit, pit, in a spiteful manner, and then came a deluge, and presently the clouds would clear up for a time, and a burst of bright sunshine would reveal a thousand hidden beauties: the white rills running down the hillsides, masses of rock of every hue, tinged with mosses and lichens; tender green glassy slopes, with dark purple crags above; streams fringed with ferns and water-plants; old grey walls and cottages, and the thousand leaves of trees and grasses, all gleaming and reflecting the momentary brightness. We had hardly time to observe and admire all these, when the preliminary patter, patter, patter, would recommence, and the whole scene would be blotted out by the envious, weeping rain; only a world of grey was before us, with slanting lines of light.

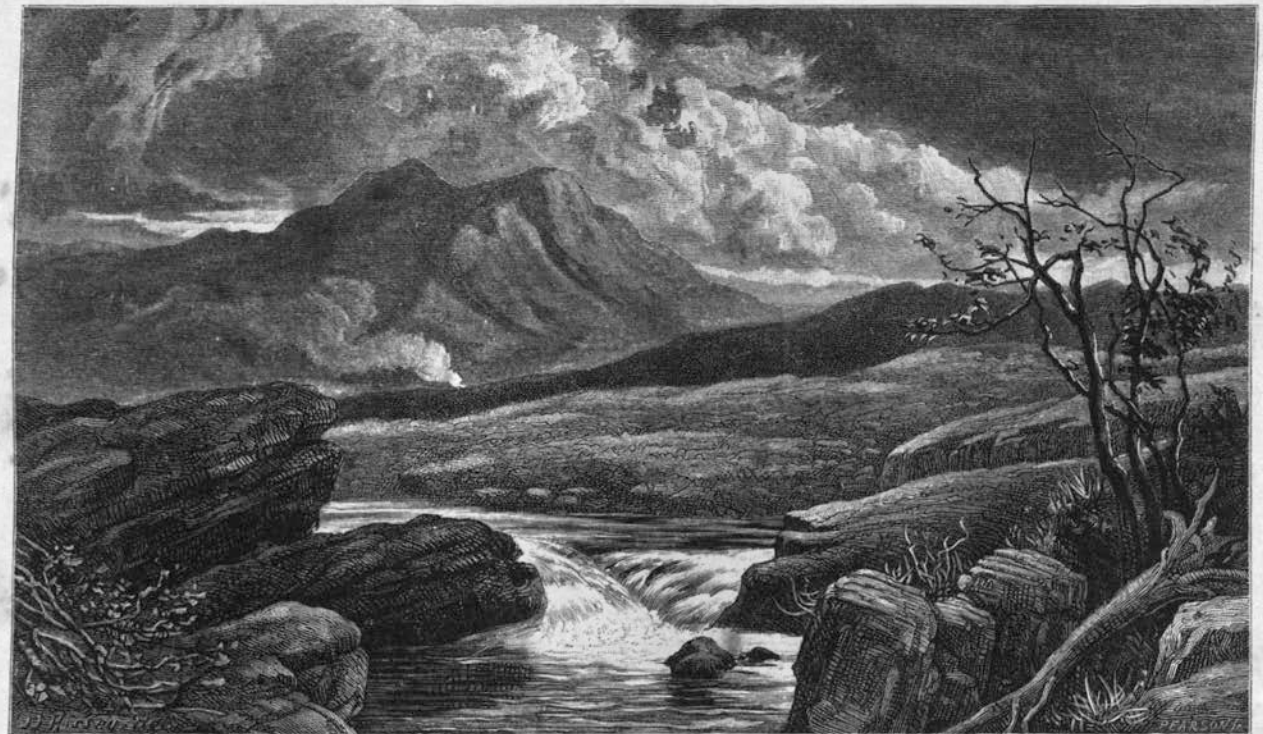
We were glad to arrive at Halifax, and drew up at the first hotel we noticed. It chanced to be a large limited-liability affair, with huge, comfortless rooms, and a general cheerless appearance. In the coffee-room there was only one or so of the several gas-burners lighted; the rest of the chamber was therefore left in a depressing gloom. At our table we were joined by a stout, jolly, ruddy-faced individual, and a very talkative one withal. We were puzzled as to whom or what he could possibly be; eventually it turned out he was a commercial traveller, who had been shown into the coffee-room

for some reason or another. He proved to be a great character, and amused us considerably with his endless stories and numerous anecdotes, of which he appeared to have an inexhaustible supply, and at which he laughed himself most heartily; to have heard him, one would have imagined a commercial traveller's life was the one above all others in this world to be desired. There are some fortunate men whose spirits nothing appears able to damp; men who always somehow manage to see the bright side of life, even when others perceive only dark shadows around, and who would seem to be born to thoroughly enjoy life, happen what may, and whatever their lot. Of such was our commercial traveller. Whether all the good stories he told were true, or even founded on fact, would, to say the least, be doubtful; probably our jovial entertainer had picked them up from one source and another, and had altered, added to, and improved upon the originals; anyhow, they certainly were above the ordinary average of such stories, and helped to pass the time away.

Halifax used, with Hull, to have the reputation, in the old pre-police times, of possessing a most strict criminal law—Gibbet Law, as it was briefly called, and which may be epitomized as follows: Should a felon be taken with stolen goods within the liberty of the said city, 'either hand-habend, back-berand, or confessand any commodity of the value of thirteenpence-halfpenny,' he was, when duly condemned, after the space of three market days, to be taken to the gibbet. Upon the three market days he was

meanwhile publicly exposed in the stocks, with the stolen goods at his back, as a warning to other thieves, and a broad hint to honest people to continue honest. The strictness of the law here doubtless originated the saying amongst the tramps and vagabonds of the period, 'From Hell, Hull, and Halifax, good Lord, deliver us!'

Out of Halifax, our road mounted with a vengeance; it could hardly have been steeper, we thought, without being perpendicular; it was severe collar-work for some miles for the horses. As we ascended, the scenery became more and more barren, till at last we emerged upon the summit of a far-stretching, boulder-strewn moorland, with ruined cliffs or tors boldly projecting here and there, jagged and weather-beaten into rugged pinnacles. At the foot of these savage crags lay heaps of rocks and stones—splintered ruins from the heights above—the work of winter frosts and summer storms. It was fine when we started, with large white clouds sailing over a sea of purest blue, but during the night the barometer had fallen considerably, so we felt by no means certain what the future might have in store for us, as far as the weather was concerned. We had reached, as it were, a huge mountain-top, extending for miles in every direction; around there were distant views of russet and dark grey moorlands, rising ridge beyond ridge, but none, apparently, of greater elevation than ours. The air was cold and fresh, and came to us in sudden gusts, and large mist-wreaths curled in and out of the crested acclivities that rose so suddenly and strangely



ON THE MOORS.

from the moors; they twisted in and out of the riven and storm-rent crags in a most fantastic manner. Now and again a mass of this white vapour would get free from its entanglements and sail, silently and ghostlike, away into space—a long line of white—till caught prisoner again by other heights, there to condense its substance and be no more. It was a wonderful sight, these mists playing at hide-and-seek amongst the stern, dark cliffs. So intent were we watching their strange movements, that we did not notice, till it was right upon us, a mighty cloud, like a mass of cotton-wool, that came sweeping along; this quickly enveloped us, and we were all at once in a damp, grey gloom—a wetting Scotch mist; gone was all the bright sunshine, not a yard ahead could we see, and we had to feel our way along as best we could. The road was none of the best, and it was by no means an easy feat to keep upon it. Whilst we were wondering how long this state of affairs was going to last, lo! as suddenly as they came, the clouds cleared away, and we were once again rejoicing in the glad, if not warm, sunlight, and great was the contrast; our cloud went rolling northwards away, but it left behind it drops of moisture on every twig of heather and blade of grass, beads of crystal that gleamed and sparkled in the sun, as though the moor had been strewn with jewels.

There is a well-known proverb that says, 'It is as well not to halloo till you are out of the wood,' and this certainly applied to ourselves, for as we were congratulating each other on having escaped so easily from a regular wetting which at one time

appeared extremely probable, suddenly a something struck our faces and stung us for a moment; this was quickly repeated, and the horses became restive, and without further notice we found ourselves in the heart of a pitiless hailstorm. We caught it fairly; there was no shelter to make for, so we had to brave it out. The wind now increased to a gale and whistled eerily amongst the rocks and boulders; it dashed in a merciless manner the frozen rain against ourselves and our horses, causing the latter to become almost unmanageable. The storm was of short duration, and having done its best meanwhile to make us discontented and miserable, and having ignominiously failed, it left us and spent its fury somewhere else. Once more the treacherous weather promised fair things, the sun was shining as merrily forth as though no such thing as a storm-cloud had ever dimmed its face, but we felt no confidence in its bright promises. How suddenly the storms arise on these bleak uplands only those who have had experience of them can understand. These heights are great cloud-catchers, and very effectively distil the moisture from the aqueous vapours. One minute the sky will be a pure azure flecked only with the lightest summer clouds, and all looking peaceful and serene; then suddenly comes a driving mist, followed it may be by threatening forms, and before you have time to consider them you are in the midst of a downpour, a steady, business-like deluge that seems as though it meant to last for days; and just when you have made up your mind such will be the case, they suddenly break away, swept along

by the unrestrained wind, and Nature is all smiles once more. Only some innocent-looking clouds bound your prospect, between which and yourself spreads out a broad, unshadowed world, but you know not what these innocent vapours may bring forth; beautiful in form and colour they are with the sun glinting upon them, their light and shade effects are full of a very changing loveliness, and they may be as harmless as they look, or the very reverse. And how clear after a rain storm does not the atmosphere so high up appear! The blue of the sky overhead is intense, deep, and full; the air is so pure, and light, and bright; swept as it is by the hurrying winds from all impurities, no grey haze can collect there, there is no veil of anything between you and the heavens above. And as for the colours of the moors, the clearness of the air, and the moisture, produce such a glory and wealth of glowing tints that no artist, however skilful, could possibly reproduce them; they must be seen to be realised.

As we continued on our way the land around became more level, a monotonous, elevated plain broken only here and there by massive boulders, some moss and lichen laden, others barren and rugged, nearly all wrought into strange forms by the denudation powers of frosts and endless storms. Each particular rock appeared to possess some peculiar resemblance to something earthly or unearthly, to the uncouth animals of the prehistoric times, or those still more horrible creations of a nightmare—they were, in fact, nightmares embodied in stone.

Spectral and solemn did they look, standing silently up as they have stood for centuries, bleached and scarred and storm-rent, mighty monuments of a dead world. One especially impressed me, an almost perfect Sphinx, looking grimly and gravely down upon us, an inscrutable and mysterious form with leering eyes, over-arched with ancient mosses, and possessing a grotesque mouth and an impossible nose, and whose unkempt hair of rank grasses, tossed about in a weird manner by the wind, gave it an unnatural, life-like appearance. Another upright boulder we passed near to had the form of a giant's face, with a sadly battered nose; another, afar off, looked for all the world like an old Mother Hubbard, hat and cloak and all; in fact, almost each one of these curiously formed rocks conjured up to us some form or another, though we did not always agree upon the likeness.

At last, and none too soon, our road began to descend; presently we passed some quarries, the first sign of human agency, save the rough track we had travelled over, we had seen for a long while. The descent was steep and rough, and we were pleased when it ended and we found ourselves in the small though bustling town of Keighley, a town of mills and tall chimneys, but from its streets peeps of distant hills and moors were everywhere visible, taking the thoughts away from the commonplace surroundings of the spot. The situation of Keighley (Keithley the natives pronounce it) is very fine, and, were the manufactories away, it would be really a picturesque place. Here we rested awhile

and baited our horses, and late in the afternoon proceeded on to the ancient town of Skipton, some nine miles distant. Skipton, like Keighley, is beautifully situated in a pleasant mountain-girt vale, through which the sparkling river Aire flows; it is generally known by the title of the capital of Craven, a dale of great beauty and famous for its scenery, which, indeed, has been called 'a terrestrial paradise.' Skipton is one of those small towns that has, in the stormy ages gone by, grown up under the shelter and protection of the feudal castle, and the history of the town is the history of the castle, and the history of the castle is the history of the Cliffords, an all powerful family at one time in these parts. In the reign of Edward IV., however, the estates of the then Lord of Skipton were forfeited for high treason, and the youthful son and heir to the same, to escape the consequences of his father's deeds, lived for twenty-five years a shepherd's life, concealed among the hills of Cumberland. This unfortunate boy was known by the title of the Shepherd Lord, and his wanderings have been a favourite theme with the poets, and especially with Wordsworth. Eventually King Henry VII. restored the estates to the wanderer, and moreover created him Earl of Cumberland. At the advanced age of sixty, the Earl, at the head of his retainers, fought valiantly for his sovereign at the Battle of Flodden Field. In this stronghold was born the celebrated Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset, Pembroke, and Montgomery, that famous restorer of castles, and amongst others this one of Skipton, as an inscription over the

doorway shows, was repaired by her after having been dismantled by order of the Parliament. Her daughter inherited the estate, and married one John Tufton, Earl of Thanet, in whose family it still remains. Over the gateway of the castle still exists the crest and shield of arms of the Cliffords, with the motto 'Desormais' carved in stone.

We awoke next day to a glorious morning, a morning of bright sunshine and blue sky, across which latter violet-coloured clouds were scudding merrily. We had now, for a change, a more level country to traverse; and with the altered character of our road the scenery varied also. We were driving along the foot of the hills instead of over their summits. A pleasant country it was, with leafy woods; green slopes, leading up to picturesque heights; fertile meadows, with flowers abounding, we had to feast our eyes upon. Very rich and refreshing all these appeared after the wild, uncultivated moorlands, and the change of scene was very welcome. Roads are characteristic as well as men; some have a wild, forbidding look, such as those we have lately passed over, others are eminently homelike and companionable; of the latter class was ours that day. It was just the sort of road to loiter along, and we loitered. Every turn revealed some new beauties, some fresh combination of hills and woods, rocks and water, all of which afforded us a perpetual succession of the most charming pictures. The Aire Valley is certainly a very lovely one; but presently we left the bright little stream which flows along it—it had grown smaller all the way, as it neared its lone home

in the wild mountain fastnesses. When we bade it farewell it could only be called a river by courtesy—and much we missed its pleasant company.

The merry singing of birds, the bleating of sheep, the buzzing of insects making the most of their brief life, the rustling of the leaves of many trees, and the quiet music of the running water, were sounds that came quite anew to us after our bleak drives of the last two days. By contrast, the present scenery was feminine, soft, and beautiful; that of the moors masculine, rugged, and stern. All around us was peace and tranquil loveliness, nothing spoke of the harsher side of nature; the change from one class of scenery to another only makes the wanderer appreciate and enjoy both the more. We camped out at one inviting spot, evidently a place specially designed by Nature for such a purpose. It was upon a stretch of mossy sward, with a fallen tree that afforded us both seats and a table; we were well sheltered by some overhanging trees, through the interlacing branches of which the sunlight played, forming moving patterns of gold and green around us. It was a retired, secluded resting-place, the very spot for a weary pilgrim—and were we not on a pilgrimage, and were we not weary too? Down through the trees across the road we watched the shining river, glistening and gleaming like molten silver, and ever and anon we caught the brilliant flashes of its ripples, like diamonds in the light. The woods beyond were all aglow in the golden sunshine; yellow and green and grey changing inconstantly as the summer breezes touched them as they passed by; and further, again,

the purple hills stretched dreamily away, till all but lost in the tender blue of the sky above. A drowsy wind, a warm, soft air came to us now and again laden with the fragrance of the woods and fields; and as it toyed with the leaves overhead, setting them for the time dancing and quivering without swaying the branches, it caused a twinkling of sun spots on the ground below. Soft and full of repose was the scene, the sunlight sleeping on all around; it was pleasant to look out from our shady retreat upon such a fair prospect, the hazy, ascending wave-lines of heat making us doubly appreciate our cool, green resting-place. We felt in no mood to hurry away; why should we? So we amused ourselves by making a bouquet of wild flowers that, with many sorts of ferns, grew in profusion around.

Peaceful as the country looked now, it must have borne a very different aspect in the year 1150, for we are told at that date in this district of Craven, 'the deer, the wild boar, and white bull were wandering in its unfrequented woods, or wading in its untainted waters, or roaming over its unbounded heaths.' Even now (however much the dales may have changed) the wild wastes of uplands and moors remain the same. Man has civilized the country, only the moors he has not tamed; they alone are changeless and untameable.

We loitered so long on our way that it was late ere we came in sight of Settle, our night's destination; there in front of us lay the sleepy little town, almost hidden in the shade caused by a huge mountain cliff of limestone (part of the Craven vault) that

almost overhangs the place. In the West, behind the dark-wooded hills, the sun was setting amid a glory of ruby and golden clouds, and the summits of the cliffs were lighted up with brilliant touches of orange and bright yellow; the valley and the woods beyond were half obscured in a deep shade of purple, from which the smoke of the town ascended a cool blue-grey, till higher up it caught the sunset's tints and mingled in the glow of the sky. One fact struck us during our travels—namely, that beautiful sunsets are by no means things of rare occurrence; at least one day in three we rejoiced in such fine evening effects. At Settle we found a small inn, comfortable enough to a certain extent, but our little sitting-room there, it must be confessed, was close and stuffy to the last degree; however, we opened the casement windows wide, which improved matters, and which also gave us a romantic view of the town, half hidden and half revealed by the pale rays of the moon.

Next morning we discovered there was a large, airy, and pleasant coffee-room downstairs, incomparably superior to our poky chamber upstairs; we found out also that the reason why we were shown to the sitting-room was simply in order that the landlord might, by making an extra charge for the same, add so much on to his bill; a favourite arrangement, as we learnt by experience, of landlords in general, and one profitable to themselves if not so pleasing to their guests. Upon this discovery we were wroth. It was not pleasant to think we had been obliged to endure a tiny, unventilated, unused room, when there

was a large, cheerful apartment at hand all the time unoccupied; and moreover, it was not agreeable to have to pay extra for the luxury of being uncomfortable. They say John Bull is an inveterate grumbler; how that may be I cannot say, I know we grumbled at our treatment when we left the hotel, and not without reason.

Out of Settle we had a long and stiff ascent, and our road gave promise of bringing us to fine scenery. There were dark blue outlines of mountains ahead, standing out clearly and boldly defined against the light blue sky and suggestive of savage grandeur. Shortly after leaving Settle we came to Giggleswick (*quel nom!*), which is a small village situated amidst grand surroundings, and renowned, locally at least, for a certain famous ebbing and flowing well:

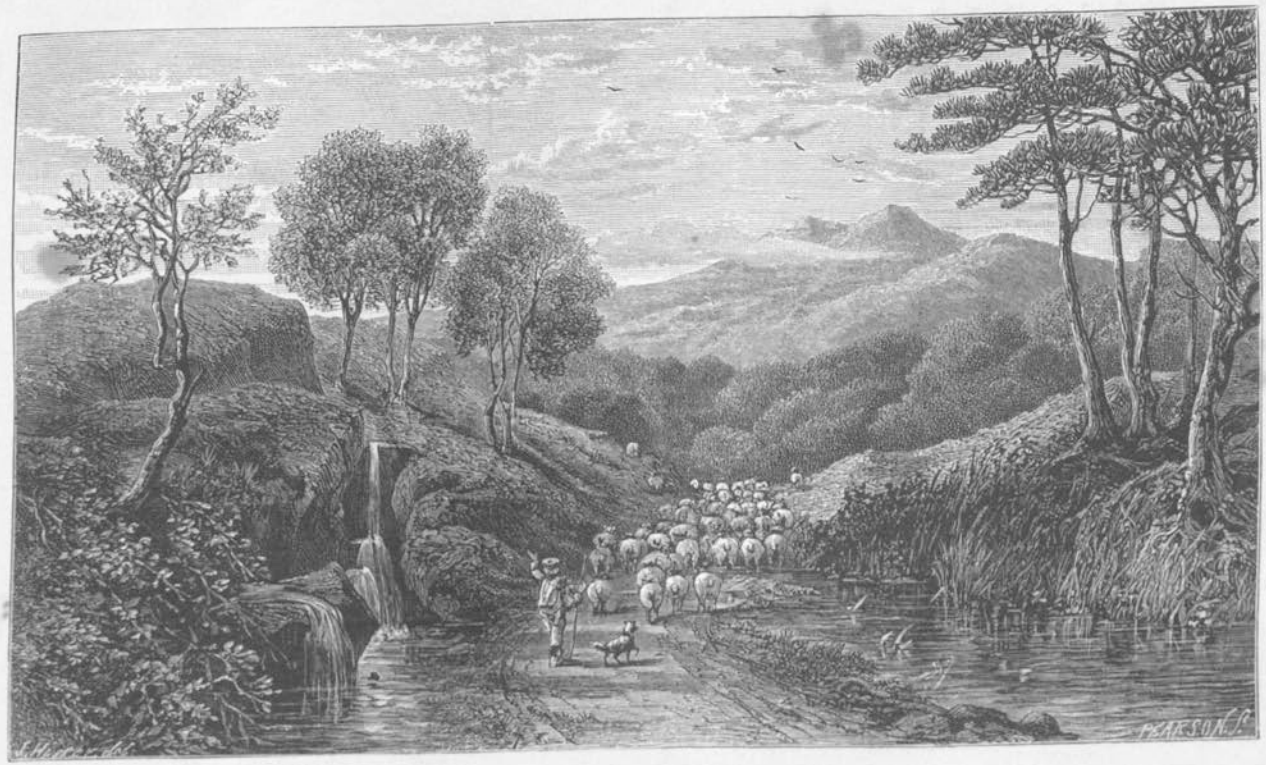
> Thence to Giggleswick most steril,
> Hem'd with shelves and rocks of peril,
> Near to th' way, as a traveller goes,
> A fine fresh stream both ebbs and flows.

This remarkable natural curiosity has been noted by many writers, and especially by Drayton, in a song commencing

> At Giggleswick, where I a fountain can you show
> That eight times in a day is said to ebb and flow.[1]

We were, however, informed that the working of the spring was most uncertain: sometimes it came and went several times within an hour; at others, it might remain a whole day without change. It appeared we must have arrived the wrong day, which was a pity; anyhow, we waited patiently, or rather

[1] *Polyolbion*, Song XXVIII.



A NORTH-COUNTRY ROAD.

impatiently, one whole precious hour (we had a long stage to make that day), during which time nothing extraordinary occurred, and as we concluded we might very probably have waited for hours with no other result, we resumed our journey, feeling we had done all that could be expected of us, and that it was very ill-mannered of the spring to strike, as we had travelled so far, and wasted one whole hour to see it in action.

The scenery now became very beautiful ; to the right of us towered up grand limestone cliffs, their storm-rent and craggy sides being lighted up brilliantly by the sun. No rock reflects the sunlight like the whitey-grey limestone, unless indeed chalk can be called a rock ; both of these gleam at times quite dazzlingly in the landscape, and the light and shade contrasts are very powerful in consequence. The brightness of the cliffs and the darkness of the fissures and recesses was most striking; the warmth of the high-lights, and the cool grey tones of the shadows, enhancing the effect in a wonderful manner. Away to the left we had an extensive prospect, a sea of hills, pine-girt and heather-clad, rising one beyond the other as far as the eye could reach, till we could hardly tell in the extreme distance which was land and which was sky, and mixed with these were smiling, evergreen valleys.

Just before reaching Clapham, a most romantic little village, in that and every other respect very different from its namesake near London, we came across a most delightful spot, a glen by the roadside with waving pines about, and grey, weather-stained rocks

at their feet. How delicious is the aromatic fragrance of a pine forest! Such woods differ strikingly from all others. The ground around is dry and healthy, there is no entangled undergrowth, no decaying vegetation or rotting leaves: the fir-needles are there certainly, but they seem to last well, and dry up rather than decay. The resinous products of these woods tend to preserve rather than permit of decomposition. These beautiful trees are really indigenous to Great Britain. Their forms are stately, and their rich red stems and branches contrast most delightfully and effectively with the dark, cool blue-green of their somewhat gloomy foliage, and to the landscape painter they are invaluable.

CHAPTER XI.

A Romantic Village—Ingleborough Mountain—Guides and their Prey—Caverns—A Quiet Retreat—Holiday Haunts at Home—A Golden Sea—Kirkby-Lonsdale—A Beautiful Old Bridge—A Narrow Roadway—Mists and Fogs—Milnthorpe—A Welcome—Weather-bound—A Grey Picture—A Transformation Scene—A Heronry—Levens Hall—Curious Old Garden—A Mansion of the Olden Time—Grange—A Perilous Road over Sands—A Stage Coach and Passengers lost in the Quicksands—Cartmel—Unique Old Church—Peculiar Architecture—Ulverston—A Strange Article on Sale—A Red Tarn—Furness Abbey.

THE village of Clapham is one of the most picturesque and romantic imaginable; it is embowered in foliage, and surrounded by beautiful hills and mountains, and through the hamlet flows a sparkling rivulet as clear as crystal. Amongst the hills the gigantic, flat-topped, much-caverned Ingleborough is most conspicuous. Near here is a famous cave (this we were told by the guide, who was prowling about on the look-out for his prey) over a mile in extent, and altogether a most wonderful sight. Of course we would go and see it; everybody who came to Clapham visited the place. We, however, decided we would be the exception to everybody, and remain above ground; the sun was shining so gloriously, and the breath of the summer air was so delicious, we declined to be persuaded away from them for the finest dark hole in the world. And so the guide talked in vain, and the more hard-hearted

we grew the more the wondrous sights of the Ingleborough cavern increased. But no; however we might lower ourselves in that worthy guide's estimation, in leaving unseen 'one of the greatest marvels of the world,' we elected to take a seat on a rock close by the little stream and sketch the pretty village, with its irregular cottages, quaint little bridge, its middle distance of dark woods, with the grand old mountains keeping watch and ward around. We could not both see the cavern and make the sketch, and we preferred to do the latter. This mighty mountain of Ingleborough is a huge mass of limestone, perfectly honeycombed with caverns of all sorts and sizes, from a small cavity a few yards in depth to the show one of a mile or more in length.

At Clapham we found a delightful old-fashioned inn, a perfect retreat of old English quiet. It struck us such a resting-place as this old-time hostel, or a similar one in a pretty country, of which the supply is ample, would afford an agreeable change for Paterfamilias from the usual sea-side accommodation or overdone Continental resorts. In such a place there would be plenty to do in the way of making excursions on foot or otherwise, climbing, fishing, sketching, botanizing, geologizing, &c., &c., to pass the time enjoyably for everyone, besides the novelty of entirely fresh scenery, fine healthy atmosphere and unknown surroundings, which latter give so much additional zest to exploration trips.

It was late in the afternoon before we proceeded on our way, the low sun was already sending shadows

aslant our path; we skirted the vast Ingleborough range, with its weather-worn sides showing traces of past and present action, scarred by time and gullied by torrents. This hoary old mountain gives its record of earth's stormy history, and shows that even now it is not all summer and sunshine here; its riven sides bear testimony to this. Our road led us over some elevated commons where there were no hedges, walls, or trees to interrupt our view of the magnificent panorama of hills and dales and grey peaks beyond; it was an extensive prospect our eyes wandered over; the valleys were filled with a luminous mist out of which the pine-crowned hills and sunlit mountains rose gloriously; it was as though a golden sea lay beneath us, the dark purple highlands appearing above like so many enchanted isles; so level and far-stretching was the mist that the deception was almost perfect. But was there ever so beautiful an ocean, or such a magnificent archipelago?

Approaching Kirkby-Lonsdale, a lone Westmoreland town where we proposed to take up our quarters for the night, we crossed the river and narrow wooded valley of the Lune upon a high and beautiful old bridge, consisting of three ribbed arches boldly spanning the ravine. This bridge at Kirkby-Lonsdale is both a unique and picturesque structure, happily placed amid beautiful and appropriate scenery; the river far down below frets along its rocky bed, swirling and tumbling from ledge to ledge, now quiet for a while, then again fighting its way past many an opposing boulder, in its fury and irritation

making cauldrons of boiling water and masses of milk-white foam ; on either side of this lively stream are thick overhanging woods, the lower trees of which dip their branches into its restless waters. Altogether the quaint old bridge, the bright, gay, brawling river, the grey rocks around, and the wooded slopes on either side, form a most charming picture and one that deserves to be transferred to canvas. The bridge shows evident design of a master hand ; no ordinary workman either conceived or built it. Strangely enough, the origin of it, who the architect was, or who the builder, is unknown, and, as generally happens in such doubtful cases, its erection is ascribed to Satanic agency, though why his black Majesty should be credited with a monopoly of bridge-building, to the exclusion of old castles, &c., is to me a puzzle. It is a wonder this one is not called 'The Devil's Bridge ;' one more or less of these structures would be of no consequence. Beautiful and picturesque though the bridge may be, it has one serious practical drawback : it is over narrow, there is only comfortable room for one vehicle to go over at a time ; possibly two might pass each other with a squeeze, but it would be a squeeze, and, like a railway accident, one of those things better avoided. Before crossing over we took the precaution to sound our horn, to ensure, if possible, our having the roadway, or rather perhaps I should say, bridgeway to ourselves. This structure deserves, quite as much as the 'auld brig' at Ayr, the taunt that

Twa wheelbarrows trembled when they met.

Probably when it was first erected the traffic in these parts was not great, and it satisfied all requirements; anyway, we observed due regard was had for the safety of foot passengers, for over each buttress or pier angular recesses are built out, as indeed they are in nearly all old bridges, affording a safe retreat for the pedestrian. The water of the river below is remarkably clear, and in the quiet pools we could see far down, and as we watched we noticed more than one speckled trout rise up and make his supper off the too venturesome fly.

Kirkby-Lonsdale is a pleasing, well-built little town, situated on an elevated position on the banks of the Lune. In the morning we took a short stroll past the quaint old church, with its sad colony of graves around, on to some rising ground which afforded us a fine prospect ahead; beneath us was a wooded valley from which silvery mists were slowly rising, half hiding the distant wilderness of fells. Strange fantastic forms these mists assumed as they rose coil upon coil, separating and mingling with each other, and eventually dispersing altogether into thin air; some would linger amongst the clumps of fir-trees as though loth to leave the vale and be no more, and now and again they would suddenly lift up, like a curtain drawn quickly aside, and reveal the scene beyond; anon others would slowly arise again, causing all the nearer objects to loom out large and indistinctly, with a mysterious half-unreal look. These wreathing mists and wandering clouds lend a wonderful beauty and interest to the landscape; they give variety to it, they drape the mountains

with ever-changing robes. What would this land be without its garments of clouds and mists? Is there no one to say a word in praise of them? Even the bitter 'north-easter' has found an apologist, if not an admirer, in Kingsley; the pure white mists of the country, it should be remembered, are very different affairs to the yellow smoke and sulphur-laden fogs of dismal yellow hue that do duty for them in large towns.

When we started on our day's pilgrimage the weather promised to be fine, though heavy clouds were floating about, some having a suspicious look of containing a considerable amount of aqueous vapour in suspense; but they rolled harmlessly overhead, driven along by the brisk wind, and ever and anon the sun shone forth, only to be obscured equally as quickly by another grey mass of intercepting vapour; clouds came and went in an endless succession, but no rain fell. Waves of shadow swept over the landscape, following one another almost as regularly as those of the sea; it was a grand sight to watch these racing along after each other across the wide-spreading landscape and never getting any nearer together. About mid-day we arrived at the little town of Milnthorpe, a small place of no importance now, but in the pre-railway times of some consequence on account of the sea coming up inland so far and allowing of water carriage of the products of the county. The railway has killed the old traffic and brought nothing in its place, so Milnthorpe sleeps on, a ghost of its former self. The approach to the town by the way we

came is a most beautiful one: high trees arch their branches over the road, their boughs interlacing, and forming quite a lengthened natural arcade, and to the left a little river broadens out into a stilly pool, in which aquatic plants and birds abound; this pool is bordered by rich woods, which repeat themselves below, and a bit of the sky is brought down from above. 'Good stuff,' as an artist would remark; 'just the thing for a picture, it all comes so well.' Over the water, just peeping above a mass of greenery, we espied the gables and lichen-laden roof of an old building which we took to be a mill. Entering the town, we drove up to what had doubtless been, in the good old times, a fine hostelrie, the Cross Keys by name—a new title to us—which still bore plain evidences of its former prosperity in the extensive stabling and rambling buildings in connection therewith. Here both landlord and landlady came forth to welcome us. They had only recently taken the hotel, they said, and trusted it would answer; certainly they did their best to make us poor wanderers at home, and deserved to succeed. If all hotels boasted of such agreeable and obliging proprietors, what pleasant resting-places hotels would be! Hardly had we got safely indoors, and our goods and chattels down from the phaeton, when patter, patter, the rain began, followed by a steady deluge, the water literally pouring off the roofs of the houses into the streets below, gutters not having been always provided by the builders of old.

A dull leaden sky overspread the heavens, no

distant peep of blue or gleam of sunlight gave us hope of a clearing up for some time at any rate, and a glance at the barometer did not tend to improve matters, for the hand pointed deliberately to 'much rain,' and even fell from that low estate when we gently tapped it, in a forlorn hope of its doing the very reverse. So we made up our minds that we were weather-bound for the day, and we set about unpacking our things and hunting up our maps, road-books, sketches, &c., to procure what entertainment we could from these. Eventually, however, we found we could not stand being cooped up indoors the whole of the afternoon; we had been too long accustomed to the fresh open air for that; so, donning our ulsters and waterproofs, we sauntered down in all the pouring rain to have a look at the sea and get a sniff of the salt-laden air.

We noticed the inhabitants of the place curiously watching us through their diamond-paned windows, evidently thinking we had taken leave of our senses. We went down and stood upon the solitary wave-washed shore, where the unquiet sea was making plaintive music, breaking, breaking, breaking with a ceaseless monotony upon the far-stretching sands. It was a grey picture—grey rain, grey sea, grey shore, and grey sky, all in a sad low tone; and in keeping with it was the querulous, oft-repeated cry of the seagulls as they flew backwards and forwards close over our heads in an apparently meaningless manner. It was, in truth, a dreary scene—a monotonous one withal, and yet it possessed a strange fascination for us. The mind has many moods, and

the gloom suited ours that day. Now and again an extra large wave would come hissing spitefully along, causing a long line of foam adown the bay, and now and again an extra fierce blast would dash the ceaseless weeping rain angrily into our faces, as much as to say we had no business there, till at last we looked at each other and mutually thought, if anyone were observing us, what two idiots we must have appeared, standing on the damp sands, unsheltered from the pouring rain, looking vacantly at nothing. And so we turned and wended our way back.

At that moment a suspicion of yellow on the sands, more felt than observed, caused us to look round, and ah! what a change was there. A long, low, narrow rift in the clouds, a streak of pale gold showing through it, and then presently another rift appeared, and still another, until at last the sun was revealed like a prisoner behind long dark bars, its warm light tinging the rain-clouds and suffusing its redness over the whole heavens. The sight was a glorious one; it was a grand transformation scene in Nature's superb theatre. The sea, too, had caught the glowing hues, the tips of each wavelet, as it rolled shorewards along, shone forth like burnished gold—every one was so much glittering, moving water, a liquid gem. Nearer at hand, where the waves broke upon the beach, they flashed out emeralds and rubies, the light showing transparently through them as they rose, the wet sands repeating all this gorgeous colouring. Then, as if especially to reward us for our long watching, and as though

Nature wished to show us how she can paint when she chooses, a rainbow came—a delicate, lustrous circle of opal light. Alas! it died almost as soon as it was born; and then we left.

On our way back to the hotel we passed a heronry belonging to Dallam Tower, but we saw none of its denizens. The wet, shining leaves of the woods reflected the yellow of the sky above, forming a harmony of gold and green, and the raindrops, as they dripped, dripped from bough to bough, sparkled like many-coloured gems. What a superb artist Nature is! Who can mix colours and tints like her? What an endless succession of magnificent landscapes, her handiwork, had we not this drive already added to our minds' gallery, to be recalled when back again in the dreary fogs of dear old London! There is an anecdote related of Turner. Upon one occasion, a lady, inspecting one of his glorious sunsets, remarked: 'But, Mr. Turner, I never saw anything like that in Nature.' 'No, Madam,' he responded, 'but don't you wish you could?' It is strange how few people can really see the subtle wealth of colour there is in Nature until a painter has translated it for them.

'A rainbow at night is the shepherd's delight,' so runs an old proverb, and old proverbs have often a deal of truth hidden away in them. There was a rainbow last night, and next day we awoke to a warm sunny morning. The clouds came still from off the sea, but they were of the undoubted fine summer kind, great white masses of rolling vapour, with delicate violet shadings; but the roads showed

traces of the past storm, being muddy in the extreme with a composition resembling mortar, which stuck to everything. They reminded us of the never-to-be-forgotten Derbyshire ones. Out of Milnthorpe we had a stiff hill to mount, but our climbing was rewarded by glorious views of mountains and sea. A few miles brought us to a romantic spot overshadowed with umbrageous trees, and by which a little river gurgled along musically over its stone-strewn bed, its mossy and fern-clad banks forming quite a picture. Close to this bridge was the entrance lodge to Levens Hall, one of those delightful old English homes suggestive of old-fashioned quiet and ancient hospitality, abounding in dark oak-panelled rooms, tapestried chambers, antique furniture, quaint old carved chimney-pieces, and the countless other relics of a bygone age; all of which are so delightful to the eye of an artist, and combine to form a most restful retreat. Knowing what a charming old house this was, we ventured to ask at the lodge if there would be any possible chance of our seeing the place. Hardly expecting to obtain the desired permission, we were both pleased and surprised to have our wishes gratified. The gardens are in keeping with the house, and have an old-world look, with their trim avenues, and yews and hollies and other evergreen trees cut into numberless grotesque shapes, supposed to represent figures, animals, ornaments, &c. One large tree with other smaller ones around, the gardener informed us, represented Queen Elizabeth and the ladies of her court (or her courtiers, I have forgotten which). For

this information we were obliged, as we should never have unaided guessed who or what they were intended for, but on being told, we imagined we could trace certain resemblances, fanciful or otherwise; and in like manner all the trees are cut and carved as man will, not as Nature likes. The effect is very curious, more so perhaps than beautiful; but the antique garden is in thorough keeping with the old-time house, and we would more such had been preserved to us as our ancestors planned them. The contrast between an old garden such as this and a modern one is great indeed, as much so as between the houses of the olden days and now. The hall inside is a dream of the long-ago; everything is there to recall times past, nothing to suggest times present, unless indeed it is the inhabitants thereof. From the ancient armour, 'bearing the bruises of war and the rust of time,' that gleams on the dark oak panelling, to the heavy, stuffy four-poster in which our ancestors gloried, all speak of the romantic age of chivalry.

From here to Grange, a small sea-side hamlet, our road traversed a wild, level, marsh-like waste, strewn with boulders, rich in peat, of which we saw some stacks, and covered with a kind of long rank grass, along which the wind made rhythmic waves—waves on the land as well as on the sea. Here and there pools of gleaming water, filling the hollows from which the peat had been cut, lit up the sombre waste; and beyond all, on the horizon line, a white glittering, a silvery sheen told of the sea. There was little life to be seen; a solitary heron looking



MORECAMBE BAY SANDS.

very disconsolate, and now and then a stray gull, were all we observed. On the other hand, our road skirted a mass of bold cliffs, weathered into strange forms, the home of jackdaws and many other birds.

Grangé is an unimportant village, with an important-looking hotel, a large building, and a comfortable one as well. Generally speaking, we have found the larger the hotel the less the comfort, but the hotel at Grange is one of the exceptions that prove the rule. Grange is situated on Morecambe Bay, and is evidently endeavouring to set up as a watering-place, though whether it will succeed in its ambition is a very doubtful matter. It is too near the glorious scenery of the mountain and lake-land, it appeared to us, to hold its own against such rival and powerful counter-attractions, especially as, besides the sea and beautiful air, it has no other recommendations; at least, if others do exist, we failed to discover them. At the hotel we found capital stabling and a communicative ostler, and we gathered from him many exciting stories of the old coaching days in these parts, his father having been a local driver. It appears, to save a long *détour* of many miles, the coaches used to cross over the Ulverston sands at low water, from Hest Bank near Lancaster, to Kent's Bank near here, a distance of some ten miles. The passage over the sands was a somewhat dangerous exploit, as the course lay over the bed of a river and across several streams, which had to be forded, many quicksands also had to be avoided, and as the tide at times rose to fifteen feet above the low-water level, there was always a

spice of danger in the journey, for though all the coachmen were thoroughly experienced men and well acquainted with their work, still, if a storm came suddenly on, or a driving mist enveloped the coach, the chances of a mishap were considerable. And if the coach or a carriage got into one of the quicksands far from land, it was a life-and-death matter; also if such got caught by the tide, which comes up here suddenly and with great rapidity, it was a toss-up what the travellers' fate would be. It was a race with the tide for dear life, and if a horse stumbled or anything gave way the chances of reaching *terra firma* in safety were somewhat small. In fact, in the old times so precarious was the passage considered, that on an insulated mass of rock, called Chapel Island, an oratory was built, and a priest provided, whose duty it was to offer up daily prayers for the safety of travellers over the sands. Ruins of this ancient edifice still exist. Many a coach, the ostler told us, had got stuck fast in the quicksands. On one occasion one had started as usual from Hest Bank; shortly after its departure a dense fog came on, and nothing the rest of the day was heard of it. Search parties were organized the next morning when the tide was out, and the coach was discovered half buried in the sands, the horses and the passengers being all drowned. Once, he told us, his father had a narrow shave of it; owing to a sea-mist suddenly coming on he had lost his way; fortunately it quickly cleared off, and he discovered, to his horror, he was actually driving out to sea. At once, of course, he changed his course, and steered in the direction of

the well-known landmarks ; however, owing to the loss of time entailed by his mistake, the tide, coming up very fast, caught the coach. There was nothing for it but to gallop the horses as hard as they could go, and trust to Providence to escape the quicksands, now covered over. Eventually he landed all safely at Kent's Bank, but the water had risen up to the axles of his wheels, and the two inside passengers were nearly frightened to death by the adventure or misadventure, having had to hold on (the coach jolted too much for them to be able to keep their seats), with the water washing in and out of the compartment, momentarily expecting to be overturned and drowned outright.

Mrs. Hemans, on her visit to these parts, approached the Lake District this way, and Wordsworth spoke of the feat as a deed of 'derring-do.' Certainly such travelling must have been of an exciting nature, especially if from any cause the coach started late, and in consequence you had to run a race with the tide for very life, knowing that a stumble or a quicksand might be the end of you. An extract from my road-book, 'Paterson's Roads,' last edition, published before the era of railways, as to the passage over these sands, may be of interest:—'The passage over this bay is precarious ; if the tide be out, cross the sands. But it is necessary for the traveller to place himself under the care of a guide, who is obliged to attend here all weathers, from sunrise to sunset, for the purpose of conducting those who wish to cross this pathless desert; many individuals have lost not only their way, but their lives,

crossing here.' We had actually at one time a vague sort of an idea of driving to the Lakes this way, as being a romantic and uncommon approach to them, but, hearing of the dangers of the proceeding, we deemed the romance of the journey not worth the risk. Many an unfortunate traveller has lost his life on these sands, and to this day portions of old stage-coaches remain firmly imbedded in them. Possibly, in the far, far future, when the New Zealander sits on the ruins of London Bridge, some of these may be fished up, and learned discussions held over them by *savants*, and they may be described as relics of a forgotten age and people; much as we now theorize over the remains of a Viking's ship. Perhaps even—but it will never do to let one's imagination run riot in this way, there is no knowing where it might land us.

From Grange, next morning, we drove to Cartmel, a small, dull, forsaken-looking town situated in a lonely country, but possessing a very fine and remarkable church—one of unusual size and in a capital state of preservation. It formerly belonged to a priory founded here in the year 1188 by William Mareschall, Earl of Pembroke, to whom a monument still exists in the Temple Church, London. This building is the only conventual one which escaped mutilation in Lancashire at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries. The church is altogether unique in design, and of bold—not to say audacious—construction; there is none other at all like it in England, and I know of none on the Continent. In the first place, its tower or towers—it is

hard to know whether to call the construction 'it' or 'them'—consists or consist of two squares, one placed diagonally over the other; the higher one being supported by light shafts, apparently of insufficient strength for the purpose, but the length of time the structure has stood proves the contrary. Then, too, the rounded Norman and the pointed Gothic arches are mixed together in a strange manner. They are evidently of the same period of workmanship, and intentionally so arranged; for instance, the Norman arch on the north side of the nave corresponds to a similar Gothic one on the south side; and so it is with the windows. And in the transepts, in like manner—north and south—Gothic answers to Norman work. Without doubt this is not accidental, but intended by the architect. Altogether, this is a most curious and peculiar edifice, and well worth studying by the tourist as well as by the archæologist. The designer of this church must have been an eccentric individual; at any rate, he appears to have determined to raise up quite an original structure, and he succeeded. However, eccentricity and beauty are seldom good friends or can agree together. Certainly this is a curious pile; whether or not it possesses other merits the visitor must judge for himself. Besides its peculiarities of construction, there are to be observed some exceedingly beautiful carved-oak stalls, an elaborated detailed screen, many superb old monuments, and—in the vestry—a curious collection of quaint old books and records of the past. The register of this church alone contains the names of over a hundred persons all of whom met

their deaths crossing the fatal sands from Lancashire; as many as ten at a time are registered as having lost their way in a blinding mist and been drowned. It was well we did not attempt the crossing; the chances of our finding our way guideless—for now-a-days no one is appointed to direct the traveller—across this trackless region, beset with quicksands, would have been very small.

From Cartmel to Ulverston we passed on our way Holker Hall, one of the many beautiful seats of the fortunate Duke of Devonshire, and from which we had the sea to our left, more or less, the rest of the journey, with occasional margins of waste land between us and it; to the right were woods full of life, in which were countless birds, as well as squirrels and numerous rabbits, contrasting strangely with the desolate look of the wild waste on the other hand. There the only life we saw was one solitary stray gull, its wings quivering in the light, telling out against the dark hills across the bay in brightest white. Beyond the immediate foreground we caught a glance of glimmering sands and white-capped waves breaking monotonously upon them; altogether it was a somewhat lonely drive. Entering Ulverston, we got 'mixed up' in some of the by-streets, and by so doing we saw a strange sight. In a small shop, exposed for sale, amongst old clothes, decrepit furniture, &c., we noticed an article for sale labelled, 'Cheap, Second-hand;' and what do you think that article was? You will never guess. Well, it was—a coffin! Such a thing we had never met with before, offered thus, in all our experience, though we

had come across many curious and strange objects for sale in out-of-the-way shops during our hunts for *bric-à-brac*, &c. Of course it is to be presumed the coffin had never been actually used; doubtless it was one of a stock of an undertaker who had come to grief, or—horrible idea!—perchance it was a misfit. Anyway, seeing such publicly offered for sale struck us as being rather a gruesome sight.

From Ulverston to Furness Abbey the country is not remarkable for its scenery; bleak moorlands, with scantily cultivated patches mixed here and there with iron mines, and a busy railway winding in and out of these, hardly combine to form a beautiful landscape. Still, now and again, where the road descends to a sheltered glen with a tanglement of flourishing vegetation, and along which runs a tumbling, gurgling stream, a pleasant little bit is given for the weary eye to rest upon; especially refreshing these appear in contrast to the bleak granite uplands. We somehow managed to get off the direct road at one part; not a difficult feat to accomplish, as the main roads and by-roads are nearly of equal merit, or demerit, in this part of the world, and twist and turn about in an indefinite manner as though they could not make up their minds to go anywhere in particular. Our little *détour* took us to a strange, weird-looking spot, which, save for our mistake, we should have missed; a bleak tarn, up amongst the moors, a ghastly pool with blood-red water, looking strangely unnatural. This peculiar colour is due to the surrounding ironstone. The very place for a sensational novelist to lay the scene of a horrible

murder, we thought. We arrived at Furness Abbey before we were aware of the fact; so unexpectedly do you, by road, come upon the well wooded and watered glen in which the hoary old ruin lies concealed. Alas! the once secluded, romantic ravine afforded a too easy route for the railway to the large iron-smelting works and town of Barrow, and so it goes along the vale, passing close to the sacred walls of the old pile. Now the smoke of locomotives mingles with the ancient ruins, the loud whistles of the engines strike discordantly upon the ear of the modern pilgrim, and the bump, bump, bumping of heavy-laden ore trucks, shunting incessantly backwards and forwards, are sounds scarcely in harmony with the otherwise peaceful scene. A sudden descent from the bleak land above took us into this narrow sheltered vale, and there, all bathed in a golden glory by the rays of the setting sun, stood the old abbey, and close to it an hotel.

CHAPTER XII.

Ruins by Moonlight—The Beauty of an Old Abbey—A Nameless Castle—A Storm—Driving by Night—A Weird Road—Newby Bridge—Road Work and Accidents—A Poor Landlord—A Hot Day—The Enjoyment of the Unknown—A Forsaken Road—A Curious Wayside Hostel—A Picture—Artists and Painting—Bowness—National Playgrounds—A Tourist-haunted Spot—Belle Island—An Exciting Exploit—Low Wood—Lady Holm—Mountain Sunsets—A Romantic Religion—A Moonlight Row on the Lake.

At the comfortable inn under the very shadow of Furness Abbey we stayed the night; the moon was at full, and we wished to see the old pile under her mellow, silvery light, remembering Scott's advice respecting viewing Melrose under similar conditions; advice however which, although he gave, he confessed he had never himself acted upon. In spite of his high authority (after seeing the ruins thus), I must beg to differ from the great magician on this point; rather would I say the gloaming is the hour to view such ruins, just as the tranquil glory of the last sunbeams rests lovingly upon the old fane, lighting it up with a rich, warm colouring, leaving all in shade, a delightful half-revealed mystery—a very artist's dream. It is true, moonlight gives dimness and mystery to such old piles, but all the charming detail of the carved stone, of pillars and capitals, the mouldings of the arches, &c., the delicate tracery and mullions of the windows, together with the draping ivy and the rich

colouring of the moss-clad walls, are lost, and these are of the very essence of the beauty of an old ruined abbey. Moonlight is only advantageous in viewing a ruin the details of which will not bear 'the garish light of day.' You may have one fine effect when the moon shows out white against a mullioned window, and her silvery light steals through broken oriel or across a pillared recess, one fine effect of white and black, and that is all.

The old monks generally, and the Cistercians especially, built to perfection; and not only did they build well, but they chose where to erect their noble edifices with rare judgment and consummate care, having an eye to the beautiful the while. In the present instance, as in almost every other case, they selected for their establishment a secluded and well-wooded vale, watered by a river or stream, so that they might be sure of their fish when they fasted—or feasted—on Fridays. The monks who raised the grand abbey of Furness at first began to build their church at a spot near Preston, but they soon changed their locality, that not being exactly to their liking. Fastidious monks! Then they came to this narrow, out-of-the-way glen, and a very safe and secluded retreat it must have been in those old days, surrounded as the place was on all sides by far-spreading forests, guarded on the north by a wilderness of rarely traversed mountains, a district guiltless of roads, on the west by the stormy ocean, and on the east by the formidable and dangerous quicksands of Morecambe Bay. In all wide England they could hardly have chosen a more retired or a

more secure spot, and one so free from the intrusions of the outer world. And now a railway shakes the very foundations of the structure raised by those of old with so much loving care, and a busy hotel stands within its precincts. In spite, however, of the iron horse, and in spite of the irreverent laughter of tourists, the cowled monks sleep none the less peacefully beneath the once hallowed soil, each with the sacred wafer upon his mouldering tongue. A grand and fitting memorial of them is this desolate temple, the scars of which, wrought by man and age, kindly mother Nature has done her best to hide.

Back to Ulverston next morning we were obliged to retrace our steps; there was no other way out of the vale for us. On our road to the left, in a hollow secluded dell, we noticed the extensive ruins of an old castle, its broken towers and time-rent walls standing darkly out against the white sky. Neither our map nor our road-book made any mention of these, which apparently have been converted into a farm-house, the courtyard forming a capital garden; yet this old fortress must have been a formidable stronghold in its day. Strangely enough, a guide-book to the district we glanced at later on likewise failed to mention it.

At Ulverston we had to remain the best part of the day, detained by a drenching thunderstorm, which very considerately came on just as we had got inside our hotel, but was not so considerate in leaving off when we wished to start. Owing to this little show of temper on the part of the weather it was late before we were enabled to once again resume our wander-

ings, and when we did so we found before us a wilderness of clouds and mountains mingled with each other in strange confusion. It was almost dark when we started, and the darkness grew apace. To one side of us the hills rose solemn, dim, and vast ; on the other a flat, wan, grey reach—half sand, half sea —stretched away indefinitely till lost in space. On the side of the mountains silence reigned supreme ; from the other came to us the mournful, far-off sounding wash, wash of the in-coming tide—a long-drawn sigh of swelling waves full of mystery and an unknown longing ; and from off the sea came the night wind, sadly wailing as it passed us by. Both the mountain stillness and the melancholy complaining of the winds and waves depressed our spirits, and we drove on in silence. Presently we left the waters of the bay and entered what appeared to us at that hour a gloomy valley or defile enclosed by barrier mountains. On both hands trees and bold projecting crags assumed strange shapes ; huge rocks of fantastic forms jutted out like antediluvian monsters ready to pounce down on our devoted selves. The nearer eminences frowned down upon us in dark, forbidding majesty, their shadowy uncertain outline in the gloom making them appear of a tremendous size. Solitary trees, too, stood spectrally forth here and there, waving their branch-like arms in the wind, looking like gigantic ghosts ; and ever and again we heard the sounds of a swift-rushing river dashing along in a noisy tumult and rage, fighting its impetuous way against many an imposing boulder, the white foam of its wrath being

visible out of its sombre surroundings. Still darker grew the night, till sky and mountains, woods and rocks were lost in one undistinguishable whole—a veritable Egyptian blackness.

The only sounds we heard were the fitful soughing of the wind among the trees and rocks, and the everlasting turmoil of the waters. And so we drove along, our lamps lighted and our horn in frequent use. It was a weird, uncanny drive, and we were not sorry when at last the end came and we saw a faint light shining through the gloom. This welcome gleam we found issued from a small hotel at Newby Bridge, and here we elected to spend the night, as the landlord—who came to the door, attracted by the sound of our wheels—said he could accommodate both ourselves and our steeds. We had intended to have made a longer stage that evening, but the night was such we did not care to continue our journey on an unknown road in the uncertain gloom; in fact, the road we had lately traversed twisted and turned about so in places it was a puzzle to us how we managed to escape an upset, if not even a more serious mishap, considering the risky pace we drove along it, impelled to do so, having only a vague idea of driving to somewhere amongst the lakes and mountains, and not knowing what or where our quarters might be.

Considering the numerous night journeys we have made from time to time, over all sorts and conditions of roads, during our many driving excursions, without the slightest mishap occurring, it would appear to us there must be some special Providence

that watches over belated tourists who drive about strange country roads. In driving across country I have quite come to the conclusion that where there is the most danger there is the least danger—paradoxical though such a statement may seem—and I would explain my meaning thus: Granted a good whip, good cattle, and good tackle, in dangerous bits of the way—and there are plenty such in England—or upon dark nights on unknown roads, then the driver is obliged to have all his wits about him. He is ready and prepared for any emergency, and above all he leaves nothing to chance. The one single accident—which is the only one that has ever happened to me during my many drives of the last ten years or so, averaging altogether upwards of five thousand miles of roads over all parts of Great Britain, some detestably bad ones among the number—occurred just because, being on the last stage of a long tour nearing home, and having a level stretch of road all to myself, I for a moment was careless, one of my steeds became restive owing to the sudden apparition of a man on a bicycle—not such a common sight then as now—and whilst I was talking to my man, the horses somehow managed to land us all in a ditch just fifteen miles from our own house, and this at the end of a tour of about eight hundred miles, over, in parts, a very difficult and awkward country.

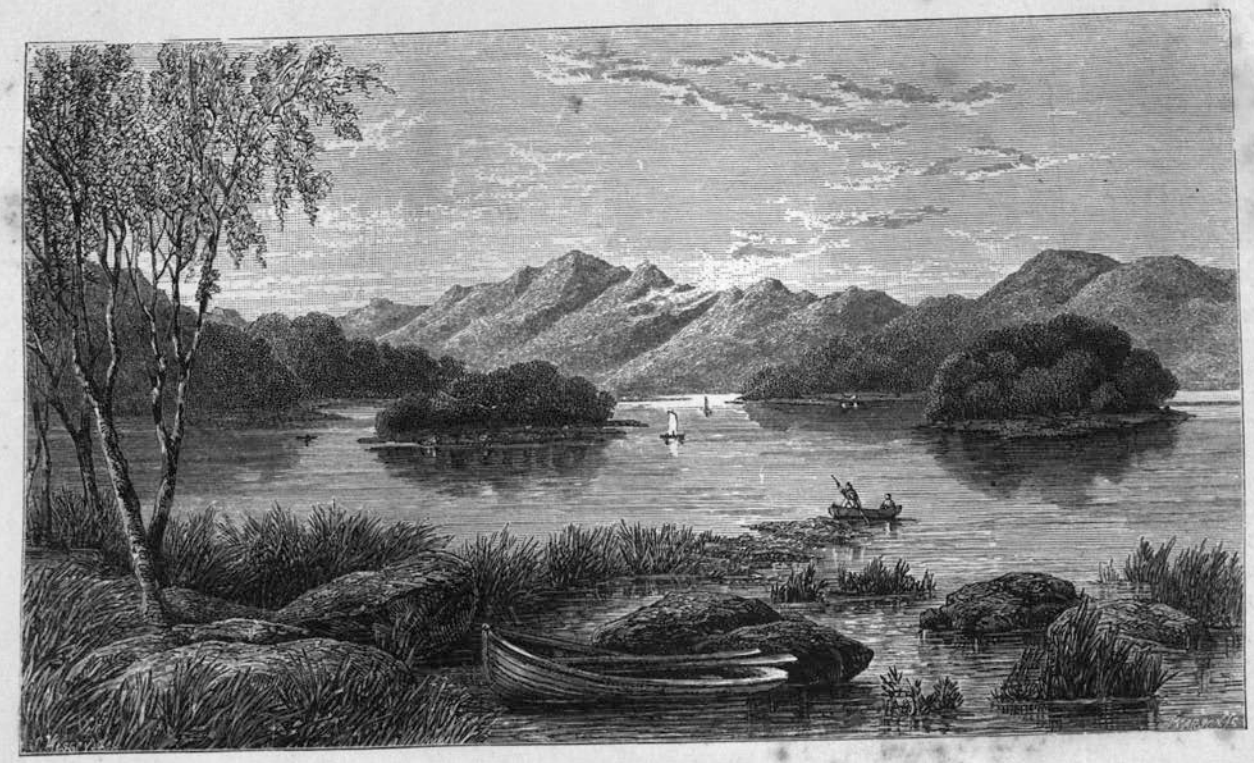
But to return to our hotel at Newby Bridge. The house itself is—or rather, was—all that could be desired; was I say, for the building, though originally an excellent one, had been much neglected

of late years. It appears that on the river-side opposite this spot used to be the landing-place for passengers by steamer up Windermere, at which time this was a flourishing hostelrie; of late years, however, the railway has constructed both a station and stage for passengers higher up by the lake side, and consequently our hostel has 'gone to the dogs,' as a fisherman I met outside next morning expressed it.

Next morning a light white haze obscured the landscape, but the sun quickly conquered this; and the long line of mists creeping up the hillsides higher and higher till they disappeared in the sky above was a fine sight. These wandering vapours lend an indescribable charm and mystery to the mountains. They spiritualize a scene. The haze and mists all disappeared, leaving us with a clear blue sky overhead and every promise of a warm day. The grass and leaves of the hedgerows, the needles of the fir-trees, were all laden with sparkling dewdrops, and for the first time flies began to annoy our horses. To protect the latter, the happy thought occurred to us to pluck some long bracken and arrange it over their heads, and, thus adorned, we drove peacefully along, the moving green affording a very efficient guard against the tormentors. We were driving now along the side, not the shore, for our road climbed up and down the hill slopes of 'wooded Winandermere, the *river*-lake,' which at this lower end deserves the title; and a grand drive it was, with charming views the whole of the way—views of purple mountains, blue sparkling waters, and many-tinted woods. But, lovely

though the scene was, we felt there was one drawback to our day's enjoyment. We were approaching a well-known land—a tourist haunted, much-guide-book-described and travelled country. The pleasures of anticipation were gone; the delightful experiences of coming across unknown and unexpected beauty spots—spots of our own discovering—were for us no longer, for a time at least. Great is the enjoyment, when travelling through a fresh country, of coming suddenly upon some wild, rock-bound, tree-girt nook, some lonely fell or tarn, some grey old-world home, some ancient ruin (to you unknown by fame), to arrive all unexpectedly at some picturesque village or somnolent rural town, or to drive up to some quaint, old-fashioned country hostelrie, whose porch perchance is covered with the fragrant honeysuckle; to find yourself—it may be when least expecting it—in the midst of a scene of great natural beauty, where every object comes as a surprise to you and calls forth fresh admiration. The enjoyment of the unknown and unexpected is far greater than is the pleasure (much though that may be) derived from viewing scenery, however fine, that is familiar, or has been over and over again described.

One of the great delights of driving along a winding country lane for the first time is the uncertainty of what will present itself to your gaze at each fresh turn; you feel as if you could drive on for ever, as though the next bend in the road will surely reveal to you something quite new, exceeding even in loveliness what you have already seen.



WINDERMERE, LOOKING NORTH.

We were now approaching the head-quarters of the Lake District; still, strangely enough, the road, as far as Bowness, is unchanged and little known; and although it is one of exceeding beauty, affording glorious panoramas of the mountains at the head of the lake, it is almost quite deserted and seldom travelled over, the stream of tourists and others being conveyed along the lake below by the steamers. Indeed, the road was in places very rough, and bore plain evidences of its little use; yet I know of no finer drive, and few as fine, in the whole of the district than that between Newby Bridge and Bowness taken in the direction we took it, and having the whole of the mountains before you, far-stretching fells, hills piled on hills, peaks beyond peaks unfolding their long display.

Not only were the views we had from time to time of enchanting loveliness, but the minor objects along our road were most picturesque. Of one spot where we halted for a short time in the shade I have still the picture before me—a little secluded dell formed by a sudden dip of the road, sheltered by trees of hazel and birch, and adown the glen a little burn, an untamed mountain stream, came tumbling over the moss-grown rocks above, and formed in the hollow of a boulder by the wayside a clear crystalline pool, and then hurried down to the lake along a narrow ravine, fern-fringed the rest of its happy journey. And down that ravine (a combe they would call it in Devonshire, a chine in the Isle of Wight) we caught a peep of the silvery lake dancing and quivering in the tremulous

light, and of the wooded hills and purple fells beyond, framed close at hand with the graceful birch—a gem of Nature's handiwork, a little bit of beauty, as delightful as any that ever charmed the eye of an artist.

At another spot we came across a curious little low cottage, which, by a signboard fixed over the door, we learnt was an inn, a fact we should certainly never otherwise have guessed. It was built on the steep hill-side, so steep here indeed that our road was on a level with its grey-slated, lichen-stained, and moss and stone-crop covered roof, and we almost looked down its great chimney, the only large thing about the place. The day was hot; the little cottage, with its thick tree-shaded walls, looked invitingly cool, as though bidding us to come inside out of the sun; and rare glimpses of the gleaming lake afar down caught through the birches and red-stemmed firs made this a most enticing looking spot, so much so that we ventured to 'try the tap,' half as an excuse to view the interior of the 'wee' cottage, and see if it was by any chance as charmingly picturesque as the exterior. We were shown into a tiny parlour, a very tiny one, as became such a rural wayside hostelrie, if that is the right term—public-house I could hardly call such a delightful retreat—and presently some clear brown ale was set before us. How deliciously cool that tiny parlour was, and how we relished the foaming draught, and what a delightful sketch I afterwards made of that rough-built, weather-stained old cottage, with just a sus-

picion of silver high up on the horizon for the lake, and a mass of russet hills beyond, the blue smoke curling lazily upwards from the one great chimney showing out well against the deep green of the trees around, and bringing the sky, and water, and foreground well together! It was a fitting subject for a water-colour sketch, and composed most happily; there was no 'dodging' required—I painted it just as it came. It is not often in Nature you have a ready-made picture thus; to improve a composition an artist has often to ignore a disagreeable or inharmonious feature, such as a new door to an old building, an unsuitable foreground, &c.; he is obliged to avoid awkward lines as well, and has often to break up the outlines of a scene in consequence; sketching from nature is an everlasting fighting against difficulties. In fact, it is the spirit of the scene rather than a photographic unfeeling reproduction of the same that has to be sought after, and so every artist worthy of the name sees Nature in his own way; his way may not be my way, but it may be equally as true, or more so, though I personally fail to comprehend it. So a David Cox differs from a Turner, a Creswick from a Copley Fielding, and so forth, and yet all are true to nature. One man sees the same landscape grey, another a harmony of rich colouring, and yet another would translate it all in tone, and who shall decide who is wrong, for if they paint Nature as they see her all are right. You cannot with dull earthly judgments represent the glowing brightness of sunlight; your light white paper or white paint

is but a grey compared to it. If you do not credit this, hold up a piece of blank paper, keeping it in the shade, for that is what you have to represent your highest light with, and try it against any bright object in the sun, and you will discover the truth of my statements. And no one can absolutely translate Nature as she is; the brilliancy of sunlight has to be obtained by forcing the darks somewhere, and it must be remembered we cannot get our deepest shadows darker than Nature's. One artist may get his power here, another there, and yet all be relatively correct; it is a matter of feeling.

But to return to the little cottage and its surroundings, which originated this long—perhaps too long—digression. Not only was the spot beautiful in itself, and as romantic as beautiful, but its rich colouring was a study. Strange though it may appear, I have found, in sketching such like bits, it is necessary to employ the most brilliant colours of my box to approach even to the marvellously harmonious and glowing (not gaudy) colouring of Nature, more so even than in making copies of Italian scenery. Those who have not attempted both may hardly credit this; but the bright yellow of the mosses, the purple-blue bloom of the distant fells, the orange and red tints of the withered and dead bracken, the positive but subdued carmine of the fir trunks and branches, the velvety-green of the pine trees' foliage, the deep blue of the lake, the azure of the sky, and lastly, but not least, the countless tints of the old weather-stained, lichen-encrusted roof and walls, need a palette of

the most varied kind. As a rule the fewer colours you employ to obtain the desired effect the better; but in painting such a spot as the above, I have found the whole range of my colours insufficient. Before we left, we inquired of the landlady, who was standing by admiring the representation of her cottage, who her customers chiefly were, for it appeared to us few people found their way here. 'Well,' she replied, 'now and then we gets a gentleman a-walking, but very seldom; our customers are mostly shepherds, cattle dealers, drovers, and a few farmers, and any chance-like travellers. Now, sir, if we could only get a few tourists (pronounced tower-ists) we might do very well; I only a-wishes we could.' Ah, well! we did not join the worthy dame in her wishes; it is a blessing there are a few spots still left in these days of cheap travel and rapid transit free from the ubiquitous tourist and the noisy, objectionable 'Arry and his associates.

As we journeyed on, the beauties of this wonderful road seemed to grow rather than diminish; there was hardly anywhere a dozen yards without some spot or peep that would have rejoiced the heart of a landscape painter, and been worthy of the best efforts of his brush. Amongst hundreds of other drives, ours that day stands prominently forth, and often in the dull, cheerless November days in town do my thoughts wander back to the bright, fair, sunny landscape through which we passed that summer morn. How gloriously the bright sunlight glinted down upon the mountains and the lake!

How soft, aërial, and tender everything looked! How peacefully the placid waters and wooded hills lay before us, asleep in the golden, mellow light! What bewildering combinations of rock and tree, flood and fell, were all around us—combinations changing ever as we sped along, colour as well as form! Down from heathery moors came numerous streams, crossing our road from time to time, chanting to each other as they hurried along to join the lake below, making numberless cascades and falls on their way. Through dark but fragrant pine groves, where the gentle wind made mysterious murmurings among the trees, our way led us; and then we left this wild wooded solitude for a more open country, with extensive prospects on every hand.

And so we travelled on till suddenly we found ourselves in the thriving little town of Bowness, amid the bustle of streets and glare of houses. The flymen and coaches were doing a roaring trade, and the hotel-keepers were busily employed; all was restlessness and activity, and we drove through the town as quickly as we could. It pleased us not, though possibly it might be our misfortune not to like Bowness, and not the fault of the place or its visitors. *Chacun à son goût.* Those that live in large cities find their change in the peaceful quiet of the country, and doubtless those who live mostly in the country find their change in towns and seaside resorts such as Scarborough, Brighton, Hastings, and the like.

It has sometimes struck me what an advantage it would be, provided the idea were at all feasible, if

Government, by an Act of Parliament, could arrange to purchase certain tracts of land—as a portion of the Lake country, some of the mountain lands of Wales and Scotland, portions of the wild moorlands of Yorkshire and in the Peak district of Derbyshire, Dartmoor in Devonshire, &c.—and set them aside for ever as gigantic pleasure grounds for the nation, as has been done in America in the case of the Yosemite Valley, the Yellowstone Park, &c.; national recreation grounds for all—the tourist, artist, fisherman, pedestrian, &c.—where everyone could view Nature untamed and unspoilt by the hand of man; for ever free from the horrors of the speculative builder and railway contractor, those two great destroyers of rural scenery. Such a project is doubtless a chimerical one, but, could it be carried out, even to a much smaller extent, and those beautiful portions of Old England secured by the nation, and preserved in all their natural loveliness and wildness, it would be a rare blessing.

Opposite Bowness is Belle Isle, by far the largest in the lake. It is of some thirty acres in extent, and contains a curious circular-shaped residence, built with stones of great size. In digging the foundations for this, numerous pieces of antique armour were discovered, relics of less peaceful times than the present. This island was in olden days the property of an ancient and renowned Westmoreland family of the name of Phillipson, and during the civil wars the owner—a staunch Royalist—was a colonel in the King's army. His brother, also a major in the same, was a dare-devil sort of a fellow of great

personal strength and courage, and was famed all around for his mad exploits, so much so indeed as to have earned the nickname of Robin the Devil. After the King's death the youngest of the brothers lived quietly on the island. It appears, however, he was not long allowed to enjoy his seclusion in peace. A certain Colonel Briggs, of the Parliamentary army, a magistrate as well as a soldier,

> Great on the bench, great in the saddle,
> Mighty he was at both of these,
> And styled of war as well as peace,

determined to throw the offensive Royalist into prison, and for this purpose proceeded at the head of a considerable force to besiege him in his castle on Belle Isle. Phillipson, however, being duly warned of his intention, had the place put into a state of defence, which, surrounded as it was by the lake, was by no means an easy stronghold to capture. After a siege of eight months, Phillipson's brother, who meanwhile had collected a strong body of horse, advanced to his succour, and compelled Briggs to hastily retire. The siege being raised, young Phillipson was by no means the sort of man to sit quietly down as though nothing had happened, and he quickly planned his revenge, which he attempted to carry out without delay. One Sunday morning he with his band of trusty followers rode over to Kendal, and during service surrounded the church which the obnoxious Parliamentary colonel attended. Having done this, young Phillipson rode his horse boldly in at the door and right up the aisle, through the midst of the astonished congregation, prepared then and there to

cut down his adversary. Fortunately for himself, Colonel Briggs was absent that day, or it would have fared badly with him. Failing to discover the object of his search, Phillipson turned his horse round and rode down the other aisle, and attempted to make his exit by another door. It so happened this one was lower than that by which he entered the building, and in dashing out of the church his helmet caught against the arch of the doorway and was wrenched off by the blow; his saddle-girths also gave way, and he was unhorsed. But, quickly regaining his followers, he rode back, unmolested, home, leaving, however, his helmet behind him, which to this day hangs in one of the aisles of Kendal Church. This remarkable incident is made good use of by Sir Walter Scott, which he has introduced with some poetical embellishments into 'Rokeby,' canto vi.:

Through the Gothic arch there sprung
A horseman armed, at headlong speed—
Sable his cloak, his plume, his steed—
Fire from the flinty floor was spurn'd,
The vaults unwonted clang returned.

. . . . . .

All scattered backwards as he came,
For all knew Bertram Risingham.
Three bounds that noble courser gave,
The first has reached the central nave,
The second cleared the chancel wide,
The third he was at Wycliffe's side.

It has always been a matter of surprise to me why this really fine poem of 'Rokeby' should be thought so little of compared to the other poetical productions of the great Scottish bard. To myself, it appears to be—if not the finest of his compositions—certainly

not inferior to any. I believe at the time of its production it was adversely criticised; and it may be that, irrespective of its merits, the fault-finding has effected its popularity even to this day, much in the same way as Byron's caustic sarcasm—

> O Southey, Southey, cease thy varied song;
> A bard may chant too often and too long,

has clung to the unfortunate English poet. We seem to remember the stinging, ill natured couplet more than Southey's merits.

The pleasant, comfortable hotel at Low Wood, situated close to the lake, some three miles or so from Bowness, received us that afternoon. We were so pleased with this excellent inn—all in the country by itself, as a rural hostel should be—that we wisely decided to proceed no further that day. We spent the afternoon in climbing to the top of the fells at the back of the place, and from which height we discovered a charming view of Windermere, both picturesque and panoramic, two properties that do not always go together. In the evening we rowed upon the lake, paddling lazily about in and out of the delightfully secluded bays, now steering our way through a little fleet of sleeping water-lilies, now through a miniature forest of rushes, till at last we came to the island of Lady Holm, or Chapel Holm, on which there was in the pre-Reformation days an oratory consecrated to the Virgin, and in which Mass used to be sung:—

> To visit Lady Holm of yore,
> Where stood the blessed virgin's cell,
> Full many a pilgrim dipp'd an oar.

It must have been a romantic sight to have seen the pilgrims and other worshippers making their way by boats across the lake to this lonely isle. Truly the Roman Catholic religion is a picturesque one, whether the heart be content or not; no pains are spared by that Church to please both eye and ear. In this respect how great the contrast to the Presbyterian communion of Scotland. Here we rested on our oars, watching the golden splendours of the dying day. Oh, the wonderful loveliness of these purple mountain sunsets; they are revelations of colour! The West was all aglow with a luminous orange, melting away into an azure grey; the earth was veiled in shadow save where the lake reflected the glory of the sky, and just one cloud floated in the aërial sea above us—a gem of lustrous ruby. Then the splendour faded, and the shades of evening came, lending a soft mystery to the scene, and behind the wooded hills the young unclouded moon arose, forming a lane of moving light upon the rippling waters and silvering the quivering foliage on the banks. The solemn beauty of that night, the hushed repose, the soft and soothing influences of the place and hour, raised in us emotions not to be expressed in words.

CHAPTER XIII.

Unpromising Weather—Judging Scenery from Maps—Peculiarities of the Rothay and the Brathay—Weather Effects—Hawkshead—Old Churchyards—Coniston—The Old Man—Ancient Hills—Tarns—Unfinished Scenery—Valley of Tilberthwaite—A Fine Ravine—Langdale Tarn—An Artist at Work—Blea Tarn—Wild Scenery—The Langdale Pikes—Dungeon Gill—A Stony Stage—A Steep Hill—Grasmere—Photography in Colours—A Curiously-shaped Hill—Helm Crag—A Fine Torrent—Unseen Scenery—A Cairn—An Epitaph to a Horse—Wythburn—A Grand Valley—Famous Scenery not always the most beautiful.

IT was fortunate we were in such comfortable quarters, for our first inspection of the weather next morning from our window was anything but promising or inspiriting. We looked out upon a grey day with pouring rain. Gone was all the wonderful colouring of woods, hills, and mountains; in fact, their existence had to be taken for granted, for they were blotted altogether out by low-lying mists and slanting lines of rain, and the lake was all of a dark leaden hue, save where, now and again, a gust of wind formed on its surface a long line of white. It was not a lively picture, and the measured splash, splash, splash, of the rain on the wet roadway did not tend to cheer us. After breakfast we went round to inspect our horses, and then there was nothing else to do but watch the steady downpour, and hope almost against hope that it would clear off. Somehow our roving life had made us restless; it

had unsettled us; we were spoilt by the continual change of scene, and now we were impatient of even a day's delay, anxious to be off 'to fresh fields and pastures new.' About noon, however, matters mended; a suspicion of pale yellow in the West caused us to hope; the clouds began to lift, and for a moment through a rift in them a sunbeam struggled athwart the gloom, brightening up in a wonderful manner a bit of wet hill-side opposite which now was visible; then another gleam came and went, and another, and the grey masses of vapour began to roll slowly upwards, the hill-tops now and again becoming quite clear. The air, too, had a drier feeling, and for a time the rain ceased. No sooner had the much wished for, though hardly expected, change occurred, than we took heart of grace, and ordered the horses to be 'put to' without delay. It might, indeed, it most probably would, soon recommence to rain, but what cared we? Somehow we never minded the weather when once on the road, but we had a most decided objection to starting in the wet—that was too dismal a proceeding. Besides, we had found from experience that by mounting in the rain we were apt to get very moist before starting, whilst, on the other hand, once seated in the phaeton, our ulsters donned and our waterproofs and wraps securely packed around us, the weather might do its worst for aught it could harm us.

Till just before starting we had no idea as to where our next stage would be; a glance at the map whilst our horses were being harnessed caused

us to select Coniston as our next destination, it appearing within easy distance, and the road to it to pass through a picturesque country. You may exclaim, how could we possibly tell what a country would be like by simply looking at a map! And there is some reason in the question, for certainly at first blush it appears supremely ridiculous to judge of scenery from a reduced Ordnance Survey map (for such was ours); but in reality it is by no means so ridiculous as it seems. The shading of the hills, the lay of the valleys, the woods and forests marked out, the streams and rivers, the lakes and tarns, the villages and towns, either by their presence or absence, give to one with some little idea of the country a very fair groundwork upon which to guess the sort of scenery likely to be met with. Of course some experience of maps and roadwork is necessary to form a judgment.

It was fine when we started. The lowering clouds around looked somewhat threatening, although giving evident signs of breaking up, bright patches of blue sky appearing here and there. Rain there might be, but it would be only showers we guessed —heavy ones, possibly, but not likely to be lasting —so we drove away from our hotel in excellent spirits after all. Leaving Low Wood, our road skirted the head of the lake, and we crossed the two little rivers of the Rothay and the Brathay. These two streams vary much in character: the Rothay has a sandy bed, the Brathay a rocky one; a short distance before entering the lake they unite and enter it as one stream. Connected with these

two rivers is a rather remarkable ichthyological fact: the char and trout from Windermere during the spawning season proceed together as far as the junction of these two streams, when they separate, the char, without exception, taking to the Brathay and the trout to the Rothay.

Leaving Windermere, our road soon began to mount, and we passed through dripping fir woods, and the wind, as it rose, sighed and moaned through the trees and dashed the wet from off them in showers of spray upon us as it swayed the branches about backwards and forwards, and now and then a fir-cone was blown right into the carriage. Great clouds, rounded and drooping with rain, drove by us overhead, to be caught by the mountains and condensed on them in fierce showers. We luckily escaped the worst of these, though now and again we got a heavy pelter, which put our waterproofs to the test; but, though sharp, they were short and soon over, and as the sun came out once more, the wet rocks glistened in the light, and the pools in the road shone forth gleaming like molten silver, and the soft west wind—that pleasantest wind of all—greeted us with its soft, moist embrace. It is a strange reversal of affairs in America, in which country the west wind comes over the dry alkali plains, and the east wind from off the Atlantic, consequently there the east wind is the soft rainy one, and the west and north-west winds the harsh, dry, disagreeable ones.

The isolated gleams of light we had gave strange prominence to little bits of far-off scenery, lighting

up a fall on the hill-side, a bright whitewashed cottage, a corner of a wood, &c., when all around was in sombre shade and undefined. What a charm there is on a gloomy day in watching a trail of sunlight wandering over hill and dale, resting a moment on a bit of still water, brightening up the scene in a wonderful manner, now making a miniature rainbow out of a stray mist cloud that hangs on the mountain slopes. It is such days that make us appreciate the sunshine when we get it.

I cannot agree with those people who deem a day wretched and the landscape devoid of all beauty only because there is not a clear blue sky overhead; a cloudless, glaring sky is intolerable. Ask an artist his opinion on the subject. Once upon a time a friend of Ruskin's called upon him, and on being shown by the latter a little picture, by Copley Fielding, of distant hills and driving rain, of which the owner was very proud, asked, 'What is the use of painting such very bad weather?' to which query Ruskin replied, 'There was no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of weather.' Wandering mists and ever-changing clouds lend a feeling of mystery and solemnity to the landscape, and without mystery no scene or picture is quite perfect; something must be left for the imagination or it will never be satisfied.

At the little town or village of Hawkshead, though it was getting late, we descended and strolled up to the churchyard for the sake of the view, which is very fine from there; and as we walked across it we passed by many a nameless, unremembered grave.

We noticed some half-erased tombstones erected to the memory of those gone long ago, stones overgrown with mosses and long lank grasses, old monuments crumbling to decay, and rank weeds battening over the remains of poor humanity.

Quitting sleepy Hawkshead (famous for being the school-home of Wordsworth, but for nothing else, as far as I am aware), at the corner of two roads we noticed an old gateway and beyond a farmhouse, a building with stone-mullioned windows, and which had evidently seen better days; in fact, we learned afterwards it had originally been built by the monks of Furness Abbey, to whom it belonged, and who held here their manor courts and formed a kind of educational college for priests of it.

From this point to Coniston the road descends with considerable steepness, affording imposing views of the lake of that name and the Old Man mountain at the head of it. Down in the valley far below, through the straight stems of the firs, half hidden by the woods, now wholly revealed through a clearing in the same, lay that fair sheet of water, looking at that hour of a cold steely hue.

The Waterhead at Coniston is a most comfortable hostelrie, with pleasant gardens bordering the lake, and possessing cool-shaded walks between overhanging shrubs and trees (just the spot for honeymooners). Would all such country inns had such delightful gardens! One of the greatest charms of a rural hostel is to me a good garden—an old-fashioned one preferred—where you can wander unmolested about after your day's stage is done, and enjoy the

fragrant weed and meditate about things in general and the pleasures of driving tours in particular.

Coniston is by no means a bad sort of a place in which to spend a few days, and the country about well repays exploring. In a scenic point of view the situation of the village is fine, otherwise in itself it is in no way remarkable. I wonder this corner of the Lake District is not more visited than it is; the scenery at the head of the lake is of the grandest description, and the shape of the Old Man mountain is eminently dignified. I think I prefer it to any other English peak, it stands out so boldly by itself; its outline is sharp and serrated, and its height is not dwarfed by sudden comparisons with other near rivals; in fact, it is all a mountain should be, unless indeed you would have it higher. But height alone is not everything; the highest mountains are by no means the most impressive. Mont Blanc, it is true, is of greater elevation than any British peak; but again, the peaks of the Himalayas considerably exceed it; and if it be true, as some astronomers say, that Venus has mountains over twenty miles in height, then the Himalayas are dwarfs to these. But, on the other hand, the mountains of Cumberland come of the most ancient stock; they are amongst the oldest in the world, and existed countless ages before the Alps, the Andes, or the Himalayas arose from out the plains, all of which, compared to our good old English mountains, are of mushroom parentage. Genuine aristocrats are our native peaks.

We remained over the next day at the Waterhead Hotel, devoting our time to the surrounding scenery

and to mounting the Old Man, which, though not a severe climb as mountain climbing goes, is an exceedingly grand one, and the view from the summit of the sea of hills stretching far away as the eye can reach, of lakes and black little tarns, would amply have repaid double the exertion. About a third of the way up the ascent there are some extensive copper mines and some half-deserted slate quarries, which detract somewhat from the romance of the spot. Shortly after leaving these we came suddenly and unexpectedly upon a sight quite of a different sort, a lonely rock-girt tarn—a black, stilly, inky-looking pool hemmed in by stern wall-like ramparts. How characteristic these Cumberland tarns are! Is there anything quite like them, I wonder, elsewhere? From the sides of this small sheet of water rose dark, gloomy, precipitous cliffs, slate-coloured and of a cold, forbidding hue, and at the feet of which were masses of stony *débris*. How calm, too, is the surface of a tarn—even an insect alighting upon it causes tiny circles plainly observable! Here we saw a sight in keeping with the weird look of the place, a dead sheep 'rock bound' or 'rock fast,' as it is locally called—that is, the poor animal has got his feet jammed in between the crevices of the fallen rocks, and has failed to release himself; no one being near to hear his cries, the unfortunate creature must have been starved to death. Such occurrences, we were told, were not unfrequent; farmers of the mountain pastures always allow for a certain percentage of their flocks being thus lost to them. We made a hasty sketch of this impressive spot, introducing the poor

dead sheep, only for effect we drew an eagle high overhead just preparing to swoop down upon his prey. Although the artist can so easily place one in his picture, eagles are extremely scarce articles in Great Britain; even in the wildest and most remote districts of the North of Scotland they are a great rarity; the more extraordinary, therefore, is it that some few years ago a tourist was attacked on this very mountain by a golden eagle. The said tourist had only a stick to defend himself with, and once actually the bird got within his guard. After a quarter of an hour's conflict the eagle sailed, baffled, away, to the great relief of his adversary.

We descended from the summit of the Old Man by a different route to that which we took in ascending, and this landed us in a moorland solitude—a wilderness of mighty rocks and boulders—which lay scattered about in all directions and of all imaginable shapes and sizes, a desolate stone-strewn waste, where even the hardy mosses had a hard struggle to exist:

> The eye can only see
> Broken mass of cold grey stone:
> Never yet was place so lone.

Such a sight carries one mentally back to the dim far, far ages past, when this wreck of an incompleted world was caused by the gigantic forces then at work. In most parts the rocks, or at any rate the exposed surfaces of them, have become disintegrated by time and the weathering of ages, and turned to fruitful soil, and vegetation has hidden the bare ribs of the earth and the scars caused by the workings

of the rude forces now extinct ; not so, however, here. A foreign gentleman on a tour in these parts, and who was staying at our hotel, one morning went out for a long walk, and in the course of his rambles reached this spot. On his return, the landlord asked him how far he had been. 'As far as the scenery is finished,' the stranger replied.

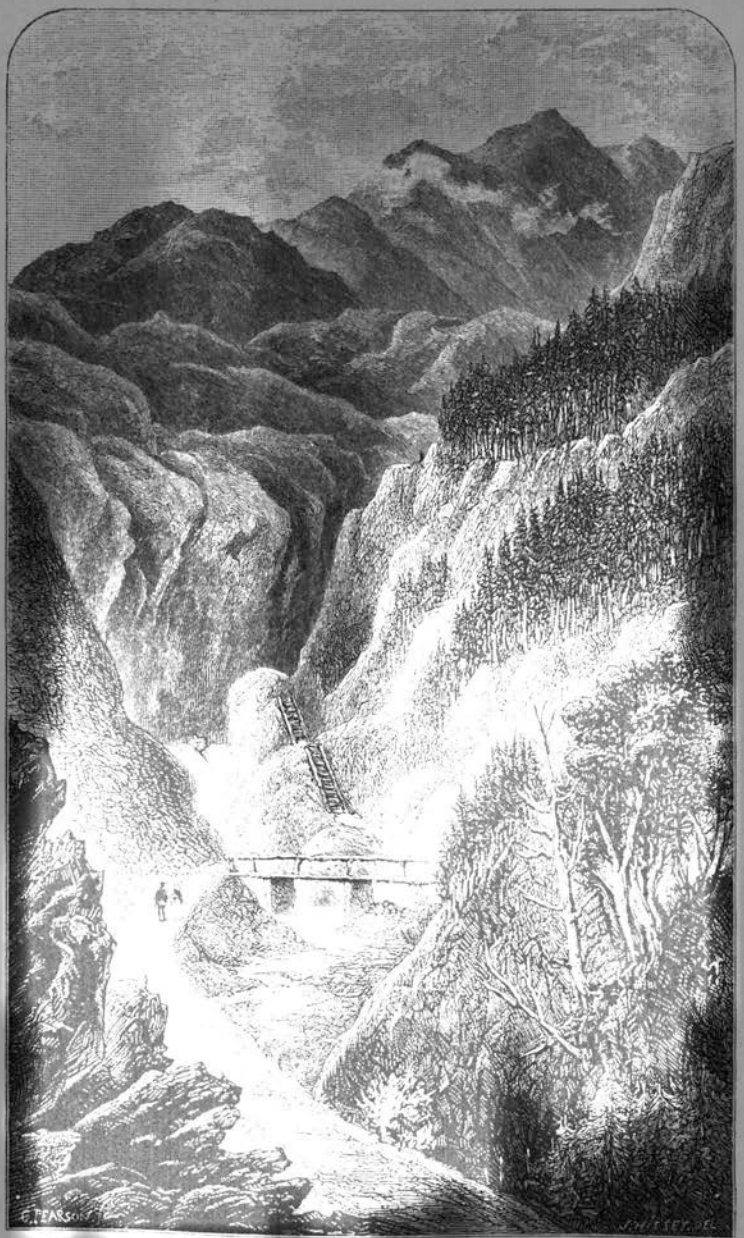
Coniston Lake is navigated by a steam gondola, quite a pretty vessel in its way. It was a positive pleasure to see this graceful little steamer on its voyage ; in fact, it enhanced rather than detracted from the beauty of the scene. We took a sail up and down the lake in it, and found it a most comfortable boat, there being a sheltered protection in case of wet weather, with ample windows to enable the traveller to view the scenery. This would seem to me to show that there is no special reason why modern inventions should so generally be such ugly creations. Given the materials, it is not more difficult or more expensive, or only very slightly more so, to shape them into pleasant models as ugly ones.

Heavy clouds with frequent showers, and a falling barometer, did not promise well for a fine day. However, as it did not actually rain at the hour we had arranged to start, we duly proceeded on our way in spite of the unpromising weather prospects. Shortly after leaving Coniston, to the left of our road we had some fine crag scenery extending right along the base of the Wetherlam cone of the mighty buttresses of the Old Man. Presently we turned to the left up the fine valley of Tilberthwaite, one of the lesser known but, to my mind, one of the

most beautiful of the vales of this district. The view looking up the entrance to this dale is very fine, and is eminently suggestive of grand scenery. Some way along the valley, at some distance from the road, we noticed a deep and dark-looking cleft or ravine right down the mountain side; this appeared to us as though it might repay inspection. So we called a halt and proceeded to clamber to the spot, which amply repaid us for the trouble.

We found it to consist of a narrow gorge, perhaps forty feet or so across, from the bottom of which rose beetling cliffs on either hand, and adown it a little stream tumbled and foamed amongst the rocks. A small foot-bridge at the entrance to the spot assists the pedestrian to cross the miniature torrent, and a couple of rough ladders help him to surmount some steep rocks on the other side; after these he must overcome the natural difficulties and obstacles as best he may. We learnt that the bridge and the ladders were erected by some miners, who found through this gorge a short way to their work on the hills above. Except to the miners aforesaid and to the local shepherds, this remarkable place appears to be but little known, and is seldom or ever visited by the tourist. Indeed, we could discover no mention of it in any guide-book, though we afterwards searched carefully through several for that purpose.

Our road to-day was not only a grand one, but it had the quality of continually surprising us with unexpected scenes. Given grand natural scenery, and the imagination in a continual and delightful state



RAVINE (TILBERTHWAITE VALLEY).

of expectancy, the unknown ever before you, the possibilities are great, ideas and fancies have free play, and the enjoyment is tenfold greater than when the opposite is the case.

We continued up this fine lonesome valley without meeting or seeing a single soul till we came in sight of Langdale Tarn, and the only sounds we heard were the bleating of sheep, the far-off cry of the shepherd, and the barking of his dog. Near to the tarn we came upon an artist busily at work. We were much pleased with his picture, which was an excellent and a poetical representation of the spot. In it he had introduced some cattle, and, though evidently a skilful and practised landscape painter, animals were certainly not his forte. Gathering, I presume from my remarks, that I understood some little about painting, he asked me my candid opinion of his picture, and I gave it him. Candour is, however, not always esteemed in this world. As far as the praise and blame were given to the landscape all went well, but when I told him what really appeared to me to be the case—viz. that the cattle spoiled the composition, being very woodeny and appearing immaculately clean—my criticism, however true, possibly just because it was so true, was not appreciated. Artists too often neglect to represent the mud and dirt that everywhere exist in this imperfect world. Only lately I saw a rather famous picture of a battle-field, in which the men who were supposed to have been fighting the whole of the day, and moreover, according to history, had had a severe forced march the day before, actually looked as though they had only just marched from off the

parade ground, so prim and clean and neat were they. Such pictures, whatever their other merits, are not true to Nature.

Our road now commenced to ascend, and it became exceedingly rough as well as steep; and as we walked up it to relieve the horses, we found it very wet besides. The rain of the previous night had well soaked into the surrounding peaty surface and oozed and trickled from it, making innumerable tiny streams and puddles in the road through which we had to tramp. Wordsworth thus describes this portion of the country; it appears there was no made road here in his time, or at any rate he did not adhere to it, and wisely too if it were then as rough as now:

> We scaled, without a track to ease our steps,
> A steep ascent; and reached a dreary plain,
> With a tumultuous waste of huge hill-tops
> Before us; savage region! which I paced
> Dispirited.

Savage indeed it is, with rocks in chaos strewn around—a spot where nought of life is to be seen, a spot that impresses you, whether you will or not, with its supreme solitude, its utter desolation, its intense stillness; environed on all sides by rugged mountains, between which are darksome vales, you might almost imagine yourself in a primeval world. At the top of this long ascent we come to the lonely Blea Tarn in a little upland vale:

> Uplifted high
> Among the mountains, even as if the spot
> Had been, from eldest time by wish of theirs,
> So placed,—to be shut out from all the world!

From here we had a fine view of the Langdale

Pikes—two bare, finely-shaped peaks 'that from another vale peer into this.' Nowhere in England has the gloom and grandeur of mountains been so deeply fixed in my mind.

The day was perfect for the scene—a wild, grey-clouded sky overhead, with shrouding mists lower down which wound round the hills, ever lifting and falling, now hiding all, now being swept right away by the fierce winds, torn by them from the hill-sides. We had been sheltered during our ascent to this spot, but now we felt the full force of the winds as they careered by us with an unrestrained fury; fortunately, it did not actually rain, though it threatened to do so every moment. The rugged Langdales looked stern and forbidding under a dark storm-cloud, and down their dark, weathered, gullied, sides how the torrents foamed, white in their rage, and gathering strength from the dispersing clouds above!

It was a grand sight; but, grand though it was, we stayed not long to witness it. Any moment we might be in the midst of a deluge, and we deemed it prudent to hurry away from such an inhospitable part of the country. From all around came to us a strange melody of roaring cataracts and moaning winds, mingled now and again with the plaintive bleating of a sheep (possibly 'rock-fast'), whose voice was plainly heard over all. With brake hard on and horses well away from the pole we made the best speed we could down a very hilly, stony road or track. It was too great a stretch of the imagination to call such a way a road. Fortunately, we arrived in safety at the bottom, though not without one or two nasty stumbles that might have

caused a serious accident, or at any rate have ruined one if not both of our steeds, and have brought our journey to a sudden and disastrous termination. However, 'all's well that ends well,' and our horses and carriage were none the worse for the badness of the way. At the foot of the hill we found ourselves at the head of the Great Langdale valley. Here we drove up to the Dungeon Gill Hotel, situated right at the foot of the Pikes, and no sooner had we betaken ourselves under its hospitable roof than down came the rain in right good earnest, the windows of the inn shaking again with the fierceness of the blast; and we mutually congratulated each other we were not upon that exposed mountain road. After a time—the storm having vented the worst of its anger, and the rain holding off for a little—we sallied forth to see the sight of the place, Dungeon Gill, at which we arrived after about a twenty minutes' climb, or rather wade, along a stony path which the heavy rain had very successfully converted into a temporary watercourse. Dungeon Gill is a well-known spot, so I need only remark that it consists of a deep fissure in the mountain side, at the extreme end of which is a waterfall, and overhead two large rocks have fallen so as to form a rude bridge. It has been described by Wordsworth tersely as follows:—

> There is a spot which you may see
> If ever you to Langdale go.
> Into a chasm a mighty block
> Hath fall'n, and made a bridge of rock:
> The gulf is deep below,
> And in a basin black and small
> Receives a lofty waterfall.

The fall, some hundred feet in height, was not considerable even on the day we saw it, and therefore in dry weather we concluded it would be insignificant. The rock scenery of the ravine is, however, fine. Wordsworth relates that upon one occasion a lamb fell from the top of the crags into the caldron of the fall below without hurt—a rather marvellous accomplishment.

We had a wet drive on to Grasmere that evening, but for all the rain it had its beauties. Every now and again the clouds would break away and reveal a stormy sunset, a fiery red, the tints of which were reflected on the clouds and mountains in a wonderful manner, and the river and pools of water on our way were turned into glowing bits of orange. Such a sunset, if actually painted as we saw it, would, I fear, stand a very poor chance of getting hung upon the walls of the Academy; and yet no colouring, however powerful, could possibly convey the gorgeous effects we witnessed. Then the clouds would once more gather up, close their ranks, the red fire beyond would be blotted out, all colour would be gone, and we poor wanderers left disconsolately driving through a cold, grey, and a very wet world. What a transition! The wet was very real, and very disagreeable as well, and we hurried along as fast as the roads would allow us to do so, for not only was the way rough but it was hilly, besides having many nasty turns, all of which had to be carefully negotiated; and as the darkness grew apace, extra caution was necessary to prevent any mishap.

How it rained that night! The roads literally ran with water, and our wheels sloughed through the moisture with a depressing sound; but in spite of the beating rain, the darkness, and the general discomfiture, we were very jolly—recklessly merry even, as though to prove nothing could possibly damp our spirits. We would, of course, infinitely have preferred to have had a fine evening, but as such was not in store for us, we determined that, come what might, nothing should spoil even for a short moment the enjoyment of our trip. We had laid up already such a supply of health and strength, such a delightful store of pleasant memories and sunny scenes, we could well afford to laugh at the weather, although it seemed determined to make itself especially disagreeable that night. Before arriving at our destination we had a terrible hill to descend—Red Bank by name—and the wet caused our brake to slip, so we were obliged to tie up our wheels to keep the phaeton from running on our horses; and we were well pleased when we saw the welcome lights of Grasmere gleaming before us through the rain and mist. We drove up to the first hotel we came to—the Rothay, if I remember correctly—in which we were soon comfortably ensconced, indulging in a warm cheerful fire, for it was cold and raw that evening.

At Grasmere we stayed over a couple of days, devoting our time to sketching and taking pedestrian excursions in the neighbourhood. Here we made the acquaintance of a gentleman, an inmate of the hotel—an amateur photographer, and a capital one

too. He had the merit few photographers have, amateur or otherwise, of having an artist's eye for the picturesque, and consequently he selected with great care and judgment the spot in which to pitch his camera. His photographs of scenery were some of the best I have ever seen, the nearest approach to pictures in black and white I have beheld produced solely by the aid of a lens, though they were far behind even the slightest sketch of an accomplished artist, having, of course, no expression or feeling, no suggestion even of mystery. However skilful the operator may be, a camera is only a mechanical affair after all, and mechanical work and hand work produce very different results.

We soon struck up a friendship, and I was permitted to go with the photographer in the evening to a dark room he had rigged up and watch the development of the dry plates. It was very interesting to observe the different features of each scene gradually emerging from out of the chaos upon the glass, wondering what each would turn out, for amongst the number taken during the day my friend knew as little as I did what the subject of each was, they had all got so mixed up. A dark spot we made sure at first would prove to be a mountain, and another a bridge—would possibly turn out the very opposite of what we imagined; the mountain, perchance, eventually proving to be simply an old cottage and the bridge some shrubs. Sometimes, indeed, the plates would be upside down, and we would go on developing them in happy ignorance of the fact, puzzling our brains at

the curious effect of the landscape till we discovered the mistake. Of course in negatives, as is well known, the whites and darks are reversed; a white cloud will tell out black, and a dark building shows light, so it is not a little puzzling to an inexperienced eye at once to gather the meaning of a negative. I spent quite an enjoyable evening in that cupboard in the midst of chemicals and plates. I am afraid we spent the best part of the night developing the photographs, &c. Some were utter failures; some very poor affairs, the results of either too long or too short exposures; the rest unqualified successes. It appeared to me every third plate was satisfactory—I presume not a bad result, all things considered. My new acquaintance was a most enthusiastic photographer, and informed me as a startling fact that another brother amateur, a friend of his in London, had actually discovered the secret of taking photographs in natural colours. Seeing my look of astonishment at this extraordinary news, I was, of course, too polite to say I could hardly credit the statement. He said when in town he would with pleasure take me to call upon the individual in question, and show me the results of his experiments, so that I might judge the facts for myself. Moreover, he further surprised me by stating his friend had actually succeeded in photographing the rainbow with all its wonderful combination of colours. We exchanged cards, and he promised to call upon me on my return home. Alas! the call was never made, and I somehow lost my friend's card; and though I remembered his

name well enough, I could never recall his initials or his address; and I fear if I was to set to work to unearth this especial Mr. Smith out of the great world of London I should have my work cut out, and so I have heard no more about the wonderful discovery of colour photography.

Leaving Grasmere, the road to Keswick at once begins to mount somewhat steeply to Dunmail Raise, a curious dip in the mountains, and a very convenient one too for the traveller. To the left of us rose the rugged and curiously shaped Helm Crag, a hill the exposed and lightning-riven summit or summits of which is strewn with many shattered rocks flung all about in the wildest confusion. This mountain is conspicuous, not so much for its mere height as for its strangely contorted outline, in the which imagination may conjure up the likeness to almost any figure or figures it chooses. Wordsworth speaks of—

> The ancient woman seated on Helm Crag,

and gives her for a companion an astrologer, the 'Sage Sidrophel'—

> Dread pair that in spite of wind and weather
> Still sit upon Helm Crag together!

Almost endless, indeed, are the comparisons this singularly-shaped hill have given rise to. For ourselves we could see only a giant's face with prominent nose and an open mouth making a feast of the bare rocks beneath. Doubtless everyone who notices this remarkable crag (and one could hardly pass it by unnoticed) will picture for himself some

special resemblance, fanciful or real. From different portions of the road the outlines vary, so there is plenty of scope for the imagination. Besides Wordsworth's old woman and astrologer, the two most famous and popular resemblances are the lion and the lamb, and the old lady at the piano. The latter, we were told, for some unaccountable reason, is the special favourite of the local guides, coachmen, and drivers. Now and then, however, you may meet with an original one who has his own special ideas on the subject.

Alongside of our road a fine torrent descended, which came down in grand style along its bouldered bed; it is well worth while stopping on the mount now and again to inspect this. How few tourists do!

At the top of this long ascent is a large cairn, or heap of stones, said to mark the spot where was interred the body of Dunmail, King of Cumbria, who was defeated here about the year A.D. 946 by the Saxon sovereign Edmund I., who ignobly slew his vanquished adversary, and barbarously ordered the eyes of his two sons to be put out.

> They now have reached that pile of stones,
> Heaped over brave King Dunmail's bones;
> He who once held supreme command,
> Last king of rocky Cumberland.
> His bones and those of all his power
> Slain here in a disastrous hour.

The heap of stones, considerable even now, was much more extensive in the days gone by. Unfortunately, in olden times, when scant reverence was shown to old relics of any kind, it was much

lessened by quantities of stones being taken from it to keep the adjoining roads in repair.

After leaving the cairn, some distance further along we noticed a hewn stone erected by the wayside, on which we noticed an inscription to a favourite horse deceased, 'whose only fault,' we were informed, 'was dying.' It appears that the animal in question met with his death opposite this spot. Soon after this the little Nag's Head Inn and tiny church of Wythburn were reached. Here the scenery is very fine, the mighty buttresses and slopes of Helvellyn rising abruptly from the valley. The summit of the mountain is, however, not visible. The little inn here is a favourite starting place for the ascent of that peak. All around is on a grand scale; Nature is a magnificent builder. How diminutive appeared the humble inn and primitive church compared to the Titanic surroundings! Vast crags towered boldly overhead, some shattered, others of strange shapes, the mighty mountain slopes being channelled and gullied, much rent and weather-worn, and strewn with fragments of the rocks above. It was a scene of savage beauty.

As we continued on our way, the scenery well maintained its grandeur; but the best points of view were not from the road, but from spots a little distance from the same on either side of it. To thoroughly understand and appreciate the beauties of the scenery, it was necessary to stop from time to time and prospect about for a favourable vantage-ground. Not only are better and more comprehensive views thus obtained, but fresh and original

peeps of well-known places are likewise often discovered, and in searching for these you may chance unexpectedly to alight upon many minor scenes of great beauty quite unknown to the general traveller, the treasure-trove of the artist and the lover of Nature. Such are often more pleasing than grander scenes; the most famous scenery is not of necessity the most beautiful. Go through any picture gallery, the choicest specimens of landscape work, as a rule, are not those of known places. Nature carefully hides her gems and choicest wares. Many a tiny glen, a remote, unheeded waterfall, a secluded rocky retreat have we discovered at various times, unknown to guide-books, guides, and those who follow or who are led by them.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mountains and Mists—Thirlemere—A Neglected Lake—Fine Crag Scenery—Keswick—Portinscale—St. Herbert's Isle—A Glorious Morning—Dr. Syntax's Destination—A Historical Spot—We Purchase a Picture just finished—Grange—The Bowder Stone—A Wild Valley—Our Ancestors' Opinions about Mountains—Solemn Yews—The Birthplace of Storms—Honister Crag and Pass—Caught in a Hailstorm—Dangerous Torrents—Freebooters—Bad Roads and Rough Travelling—Buttermere and its Tradition—Grand Amphitheatre of Mountains—Evening amongst the Hills.

As we drove along that grand upland valley beneath the shadow of the mighty Helvellyn, the cloud effects were very fine. There were low-lying white masses of vapour trailing along the hill-sides, through which in places the distant peaks showed in dreamy, dim, uncertain forms. And from out of the clouds, dashing headlong downwards, bounding joyously like things of life, came many a milk-white stream, and now and again a torrent made its hoarse complainings heard. As the vapours slowly rose and parted, they afforded us many a fanciful and unexpected peep of the craggy sides of the mountains beyond. What a feeling of freedom these wild torrents and leaping streams give as they urge along their impetuous way, now overlapping in their haste the impeding boulders, ever bounding onwards with nothing to stop their progress till at last they reach their haven in the all-absorbing sea! The loud gurgling of these streams was in full har-

mony with the scene. The stillness that otherwise prevailed around was only emphasized by the sounds of the falling waters.

It was one of those uncertain days, half inclined to storm and rain, and half inclined to be sunny and bright, ever changing between the two, and the changes afforded us beautiful effects; the bright gleams of light revealing every hollow fissure, seam, and rent on the bare hill-sides, the results of endless storms of countless ages past. How invigorating and tonic was the light, vitalizing air! Everything around conveyed to us the idea of unlimited freedom: the wild, bare, fenceless mountains, the clouds gathering on their summits, wanderers from afar from off the wild Atlantic resting only after their journey, the hurrying winds, the raging torrents—all was movement, life, uncontrolled liberty. Man has not subdued the mountains yet! Thirlemere presently came into sight. Alas! poor lake; the Manchester people have planned to turn it into a huge reservoir, and may possibly spoil its beauties. Moorlands seem to me specially intended to act as great water catchers and holders. The spongy and peaty soil absorbs large quantities of moisture and retains it. There is nothing above the moors but the heavens, so the water could never in any way become contaminated. Thirlemere is the highest of the lakes, and its elevated position has tempted the engineers to utilize it for the benefit of the Manchester people. Thirlemere too is a case in point of the necessity —if you would really know a spot—of stopping and leisurely inspecting and exploring it; and here comes

the supreme advantage of having full control over your conveyance. A ramble by the lake sides, both east and west shores, reveals many exquisite and unexpected bits and grand views, hardly to be imagined by those who simply see this sheet of water from merely driving by. The shadows of the overhanging cliffs and hills give the clear waters a dark look, the scenery on its borders being exceedingly fine. Eagle Crag is a capital specimen of what a precipice should be, and there is another one at the lower end, the Ravens' Crag, equally grand and picturesque.

At the King's Head Inn, at Smeathwaite Bridge, we baited our horses and made our mid-day halt. There is some fine sketching-ground about here, and this little inn, it appears to me, would make a capital artists' head-quarters.

Soon after leaving Smeathwaite the road begins to mount, and crosses a boggy country, devoid of interest; but the scenic beauties are only held in reserve for the delight of the traveller who may not have journeyed this way before, and not know what is in store for him. I envy anyone a first drive on this road. Well do I remember the delightful surprise it gave me—a surprise never to be forgotten. There are, as far as my experience goes, few roads in England that so suddenly, and without any suggestions of the good things coming, reveal such a magnificent prospect as this does, as it turns an angle in its descent into the far-famed Derwentwater valley. It is a matchless prospect; down below you lies the tranquil lake, with its wooded

islands environed on all sides by finely-shaped mountains and richly-timbered slopes—a view to be seen, but not to be described or painted. Gray declared, on leaving Derwentwater by this road, as he accidentally turned round on this spot, he was so charmed with it, 'that I had almost a mind to go back again.'

The town of Keswick is not upon the lake shore, it is some little way inland. It was so busy that afternoon with coming and departing tourists, coaches leaving and arriving, that we concluded to drive right through the place, on the chance of finding quieter and more countrified quarters at Portinscale, a pleasant little village just beyond Keswick, a sort of west-end to the town. Keswick is a homely-looking place, not picturesque, certainly, but one can forgive its plainness on account of the beauty of its surroundings. There are several pencil manufacturers here, which make up the blacklead or plumbago from the Borrowdale mines into those useful articles; and as we passed through a pleasant odour of cedar-wood came to us now and again; in fact, one writer has called it 'the cedar-scented town.'

At the inn at Portinscale we found capital accommodation, and in the evening we indulged in a row. Of all the lakes I know anywhere, to my mind Derwentwater is the most beautiful; perfect in form, it is almost an oval, being three miles long by one and a half mile in breadth. It is not so small as to be insignificant, nor large enough (as some of the Scotch lochs) as to be a parody on the sea. The

mountains around are bold in outline, and luxuriously wooded at their feet; they are high enough to be grand, yet they do not belittle the lake. Moreover, it has one especial quality—the mountains at the foot of it are bold and high; thus, from every point of the lake, looking both up and down, there is a fine prospect. Generally, almost always as far as I can remember, the mountains degenerate towards the foot of all lakes to unpicturesque heights or lowlands. Then the islands are happily placed, are pleasing in form, and well wooded. Moreover, there is no steamer on the lake to mar its tranquil loveliness. Long may it remain steamerless! Launching our substantial bark (an old tub, my wife contemptuously called it) upon the lake, we rowed to the famed St. Herbert's Isle, and landed there. This island derives its name from a holy anchorite who here had his cell. St. Cuthbert, of Durham, and he were great friends, and the lonely hermit, on his solitary island, prayed that when St. Cuthbert died he too might expire.

> Nor in vain
> So pray'd he—as our chronicles report,
> Though here the hermit ended his last day,
> Far from St. Cuthbert, his beloved friend—
> Those holy men both died in the same hour.

After his death Mass used to be said in a chapel erected on the island, for which attendance a forty days' indulgence was granted. As we rowed homewards, the West was all aglow with the setting sun, against which the mountains showed a dark purple-grey. The golden light of the sky, reflected on the stilly lake, turned it too to gold; but quickly the

gold departed, and, as we wended our way back, we chanced to look upwards. The evening star had risen behind Skiddaw's looming height; then the sky gradually darkened, the lake became silver, the tiny light of the pale star trembled on its rippled surface, and, in a half-mournful cadence, from the southern shore came the musical sounds of the falling waters of the cataract of Lodore.

Next morning was a delightful one; a bright blue sky was overhead, flecked only with the lightest summer clouds; warm sunshine there was, but tempered by a pleasant breeze; Nature everywhere was looking her gayest and brightest. The regular road to Borrowdale and Lodore was on the other side of the lake, and by it all the tourists go. This was enough for us not to patronize it if there were another way, and our map showed us there was a road on our side of Derwentwater; and although the ostler assured us it was a rough and hilly one, and not half as good as the other (which was 'beautifully level'), we selected, to his astonishment, the uneven way. It turned out to be all the ostler said —rough, narrow, and hilly—but its very hilliness afforded us extensive views, and delightful prospects of the lake, as it wound along the sides of the Cat Bells—the curiously-shaped hills that bound the lake on this side; and in places there was no fence or protection of any kind between us and the steep descent into the water, and, as the road was narrow, and our side of it was the precipitous one, we were not sorry that we had it to ourselves. It must not be forgotten that Derwentwater was the destination

of that famous traveller in search of the picturesque, Dr. Syntax. Across the lake we had a fine view of Lord's Island, which at one time contained the residence of the ill-fated Earl of Derwentwater, and beyond it of Wallow Crag, through a ravine in which (called to this day the Lady's Rake —rake being the local term for a hollow) the countess escaped in 1715, carrying with her all her valuable jewels, hoping by the aid of them to somehow bribe the warders, and thus help her husband to escape from the Tower.

Whilst stopping to admire the view of this historical spot, we noticed an artist seated on a boulder close to the road packing up his easel, &c., having just finished a sketch of the island and crag, and which he kindly showed to us. It was a most faithful transcript of Nature. We admired it much. He replied, being doubtless not overburdened with this world's goods, and not reluctant to conclude a bargain if possible, 'As it pleases you so much, you should make it your own.' It is not every artist that is a good business man as well as a painter; this individual was evidently both. We inquired what sum would be required to transfer the ownership of the sketch. The amount was duly named, and, not being excessive, the picture became ours, and was duly packed away with our belongings (it was not a large one), and we proceeded on our journey, enriched by a clever little work of art, and doubtless the artist was as pleased as we were at the result. It was not often, we imagined, that a landscape painter finds a customer

for his productions within ten minutes of finishing his work!

And now the valley of Borrowdale, enclosed by bold barrier mountains, opened up dreamily before us, half hidden in a blue-grey misty haze that made everything uncertain, the tops of the mountains alone being tinted with the warm glow of the sun, and nearer at hand the hill slopes told out all brown and green and purple and gold. The view was both charming and impressive. At the entrance to this noted vale we passed through the primitive village of Grange; here the monks of Furness had a large barn for the storing of grain, &c. The quaint double bridge and lowly cottages of this little hamlet, with the rippling river in the foreground and stern precipices for a background, form a most effective picture. Near here is the much too famous Bowder Stone, a huge fragment of rock that has evidently by some convulsion of Nature been detached from the heights above, which the Lake poet has described as

> A mass of rock, resembling as it lay,
> Right at the foot of that moist precipice,
> A stranded ship, with keel upturn'd, that rests
> Careless of winds and waves.

But this description appears almost in excess of even a poet's license, for anything more unlike a ship, whether upturned or not, can hardly be imagined. This spot, which is in the very centre of the scenic beauties of Borrowdale, has unfortunately become quite a picnic ground for excursionists; and the ghastly remains of broken bottles and the litter of past feasts take away all the romance of it, even

if the noisy trippers are away. Nearly opposite to this gigantic rock is the finely-shaped Castle Crag, fortified at one time by the Romans. The scenery just here is exceedingly beautiful; the valley suddenly narrows so that there is only just room for the road and the river, and the combination of rock and foliage, mountains, and running water is particularly pleasing and happy. Further along the scenery became bleaker; on either side of us bare mountains raised their stormy outlines to the sky, wasted by the sweeping winter gales, with boulders at their feet in chaos strewn around; but just at the bottom of the valley where the road went was an oasis of green in an unprofitable desert of rocks.

It is amusing to read the exaggerated terms which our hill-hating ancestors of a century and more ago employed to describe this class of scenery. Dr. Johnson called them 'those dreadful hills,' and Gray applied the epithet 'horrid' to the Alps; the love of mountain scenery had not then arisen. Gray, who visited the district in 1769, failed to fully explore this valley, for we learn from him 'from the accounts of the place he had heard he considered it a too dangerous exploit to attempt to penetrate it farther than Smeathwaite, above which spot,' he writes, 'all access is barred to prying mortals.'. Even in my Road Book, 'Paterson's Roads,' edition of 1828, the same style of extravagant writing is indulged in. Speaking of the Devil's Bridge in Wales, the editor of that most useful work writes: 'The emotions of astonishment and terror produced on the mind by viewing the scene far exceeds the

utmost powers of language. . . . The yawning chasm, &c., heightens the impression of terror,' and so forth. And in a guide-book published about the same date occurs the following sentences in describing the locality of Blea Tarn we had recently visited: 'The pleasure with which the tourist surveys the scene is, however, in a good measure lost in the overpowering sensation of danger. . . Above him rise tremendous hills, whose bases appear to unite; beneath lies a precipice which the human eye can scarcely fathom, and along its sides winds the narrow and almost perpendicular path, whence by one false step the traveller would be precipitated into the gulf. Upon this scene the eye looks down with terror, the place being calculated to inspire emotions of the most awful description,' and so on in superabundance, and after all of which I feel how puny were my feeble attempts to give an account of the spot.

But to return to ourselves. High up this valley, a mile or so beyond the tiny hamlet of Seatoller, right in the heart of the mountains, stand four grand and ancient yew trees, dark and solemn looking, old and gnarled,

> Fraternal four of Borrowdale
> Join'd in one solemn and capacious grove;
> Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth
> Of intertwisted fibres, serpentine.

We scrambled along the rough hill-sides to inspect these memorable trees; over moss-decked boulders and through a waving undergrowth of bracken we wended our way in search, and our climb was well rewarded. It was truly a lonesome spot, shut in all

around by dark mighty mountains, overawing, stern, and vast. There was an oppressive silence in the air; no sound was to be heard save now and again the fitful sighing of the wind amongst the darksome branches overhead, and the distant murmur of some far-off torrent, sounds that appeared to make the general silence more profound. Not a stray sheep, not even a solitary bird, no living creature of any kind was visible but ourselves; nothing the handiwork of man, or suggestive of him. We only saw the four weird solemn yews, standing out gaunt and grim like spectres against the cold grey sky. Around and beneath these grows no grass, only a covering of red faded dead needles, cast from the branches overhead, and a few bare cold stones; it was as though a curse had fallen on the very ground. It was an uncanny spot, a spot that somehow depressed us even against our will; an evil genius seemed over all, and yet the place had a strange fascination for us. These trees are centuries old, possibly each one has existed a thousand years or more. They now before us stand as they stood long ages ago, gloomy, dark, and forbidding. Who knows but on this very spot the Druids of old may not have raised a temple, it is not an unlikely place!

This part of England, surrounded as it is by high mountains, which are the first heights to effectually check the Atlantic clouds, is the birthplace of storms, and is about the wettest, if not the very wettest, place in the kingdom; and as if to keep up its reputation, although the sky had been so fair on starting, now dark-grey clouds were

gathering in an ominous manner over the mountain tops; so we hastened back to the phaeton, as we were desirous of getting over the wild Honister pass to Buttermere in fine weather if possible. Soon after leaving Seatoller our road began to mount, and oh! that road—road, no, that was no name for it; track, no, that were too good a title to give it; it was rather a dried-up watercourse. In fact, once or twice so intolerably bad did the way become that we actually doubted if we were on a road at all, and pulled up to consider whether or not we had made some stupid blunder; but an examination of the ground showed us here and there between the assortment of stones all around traces of horses' hoofs and suspicions of the impress of wheels, so we continued on our way. It is no exaggeration whatever to say, so exceedingly steep and rough was our track that our horses had quite enough to do to drag the phaeton up empty. In fact, I believe that dreadful ascent of the Honister Crag pass was by far and away the hardest day's work they ever had. The crag and pass appear to have been rent asunder and formed by some mighty upheaval of Nature in the earth's young days, in the times immeasurably remote when, 'amid the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds,' the scenery of our mountain lands was being formed. This truly magnificent crag rises in a single sheer precipice to the height of 1,500 feet, barren, rugged, mined, and weather-worn. It is of a slate formation, the dark colour of which adds considerably to its impressiveness. Steep as it is, in truth, a perpendicular rock of wall, it has been honeycombed

for slates. No, spot, however remote or however difficult of access, appears to be safe from the enterprising hand of man if there is only a prospect of money-making to encourage him. This wild defile has been the scene, in the good or troublous old times, of more than one desperate conflict between certain Scottish freebooters and the native inhabitants. Here, in one of the forays, was slain young Græme, a famous chieftain of the lawless Scots. The dalesmen of those unenviable days had to tend their flocks with one hand and be prepared to defend them with the other. Sheep and cattle farming was not the peaceful and quiet occupation it now is, and one would imagine hardly more profitable, for in those times cattle-lifting was considered almost a lordly enterprise, and certainly not one to be condemned. Then the peaceful husbandman naturally exclaimed,

> Lord God! is it not a pitiful case,
> That men dare not drive their goods to t' fell,
> But limmer thieves drives them away
> That fears neither heaven nor hell?

Grand at all times this rugged pass must appear; doubly grand did it seem to us under the influence of a threatening storm-cloud as we saw it, with the wind wailing and moaning through the narrow ravine. And oh! that cloud, we half feared it, but we little deemed how intensely disagreeable it could be. Before we had time to 'make ready' it was down upon us in a deluge of rain and hail; we were simply wet through before we could get our ulsters or our waterproofs on, and the well of the

phaeton was covered with white hailstones. The horses danced about, stung with the icy darts, which also made our faces smart again. We were, however, to some extent compensated by the fine atmospheric effects. Down in the valley the sun was shining brightly, plainly visible through the slanting lines of the rain—a strange contrast of warm sunshine and cold drenching wet; and just as we approached the edge of the storm the light showed through the falling moisture in a glory of prismatic colours. That moment of beauty was worth all the discomfort we had gone through. But still, there was no disguising the fact that we were soaking wet. Of course, our waterproofs were now useless. There was nothing for it but to drive along as fast as our terrible road would permit, and to make friends with the landlady of the inn at Buttermere, and get her to allow us to dry ourselves before her kitchen fire; doubtless such a request would not be a novel one to her. But the road was too rough to take liberties with; trotting, we jolted and swayed about so we might almost as well have been at sea as on *terra firma*. Indeed, in one or two places we bumped about in such a manner that we had a difficulty in keeping our seats, and looking behind I noticed our man had both his hands clasped to the sides of the carriage, 'holding on like grim death,' as he remarked. The back seat of a phaeton is by no means an easy one to keep over a rough road. We had several young torrents to cross, which went dashing and gurgling across our track in fine style; they managed, too, to bring down quite an assort-

ment of rounded stones and boulders of all sizes, and these by no means improved our driving; indeed, one particular boulder, half hidden in the bed of a stream, nearly brought both our horses down; it was a touch-and-go business that might have put a sudden end to our most delightful trip. In truth, the one fly in our ointment, the only thing that ever cast a shadow over the great and otherwise unqualified enjoyment of our outing, was the fear of anything going wrong with either of the horses, and thus bringing our pleasures to an untimely end, for as we wandered where we would over rough mountain lands, and rarely traversed moorlands, our roads were of all descriptions and sorts, some being, as in the present instance, not worthy of the name, and very trying both to horses and carriage. However, we made the best of our way along, and eventually arrived at the little inn at Buttermere all safe and sound but very wet. We soon made friends with the hostess, and a seat before the glorious fire in the snug little kitchen made us quickly forget all our past discomforts.

This little inn has its tradition. Once upon a time—to commence the story in the genuine old-fashioned way, for although the history is true I have forgotten its exact date, however, it was in those times when forgery was punished by death—once upon a time, then, the innkeeper had a daughter, a rural beauty, and locally famous for her charms. Came one day to the tiny hostelrie a stranger, a gentleman, evidently, who gave out he had come to these secluded parts to sketch and fish and gene-

rally to rest himself, and as a thorough change from town life. The stranger was struck by the beauty of his landlord's daughter; he wooed and won her, and eventually married the girl. Hardly had the marriage taken place when the bridegroom was arrested on the charge of forgery; in due course he was tried, found guilty, and hanged. Such is the brief history of Mary, the beauty of Buttermere. Even this out-of-the-way solitary hamlet has had its exciting episode. In fact, there is hardly a village in England, however small, but has some local memories or traditions, some story of the past, of more or less interest. The number of curious tales and histories confined to the district we have gathered from time to time during our journey would, if fully related, fill a good-sized volume. Many of the legends of the surrounding old families and houses were almost too strange not to be true. Even in this present enlightened century it is astonishing how many old country mansions have the credit of being haunted. In one case, during a previous journey, we passed an old castle reputed to have a family ghost attached to it. Though not very extensive, it is a grand old building —a little gloomy, perhaps, but a delightful retreat in the summer time, being beautifully situated in the midst of lovely surroundings of hill and dale, and wood and river. And yet it is a fact, the old house remains empty; its ghostly reputation appears most effectually to keep all tenants away, although it has been offered at a ridiculously low rental over and over again. Many people, tempted by the

particulars and terms, come to look at the place, we were told, but hearing of its reputation they leave it tenantless. And yet, nowadays, nobody believes in ghosts! I must confess, however, the place in question has a very eerie, haunted look, and though I myself had almost determined to beard the spectre in his den and take the old castle for a summer, on second thoughts, and a second inspection of its antique chambers, I concluded I would not.

The grand amphitheatre of mountain precipices at the head of Buttermere, unique in its way, with its jagged, torn, and rent outlines, appeared very impressive as we looked back upon it lying wild and dark under the heavy storm-clouds, with numberless white torrents streaming down the gloomy tempest-stained sides of the blackened crags. The quality of these clouds we had learnt by experience—a good school is experience, but it is somewhat a dear and disagreeable one.

We had a fine drive back to Portinscale through the vale of Newlands. The rounded hills with their long gradual slopes, green to their very summits, contrasted pleasingly with the bare and rocky crag-like formation of the first portion of our stage; the landscape no longer was severe, it had a milder physiognomy. Too lofty to be called hills, and too even in outline, and hardly grand enough for mountains, these heights have the local title of fells. Short thick grass and bracken appear to be the only growth upon them; sheep their chief if not sole inhabitants, the tracks of which animals, together with sundry

footpaths, run all over their sides in every conceivable direction, looking for all the world like so many white veins.

As we approached our destination, bright bars of glowing orange showed through the dun-coloured clouds where the sun was setting; long blue solemn shadows stole over the hills; the winds had lulled themselves to sleep; a shadowy indistinctness spread over all around, and silent mists began to gather in the valleys. In front of us Skiddaw stood boldly forth, like a mighty sentinel keeping watch and ward over the land, a giant among giants. His hoary old head, suffused with a rosy glow, was transfigured in the tranquil lake below, his channelled sides, ravines, and gullies being veiled in shadow; and beyond were distant peaks, all bathed in a warm purple light. It was a scene full of a certain poetic dreamy imagery.

CHAPTER XV.

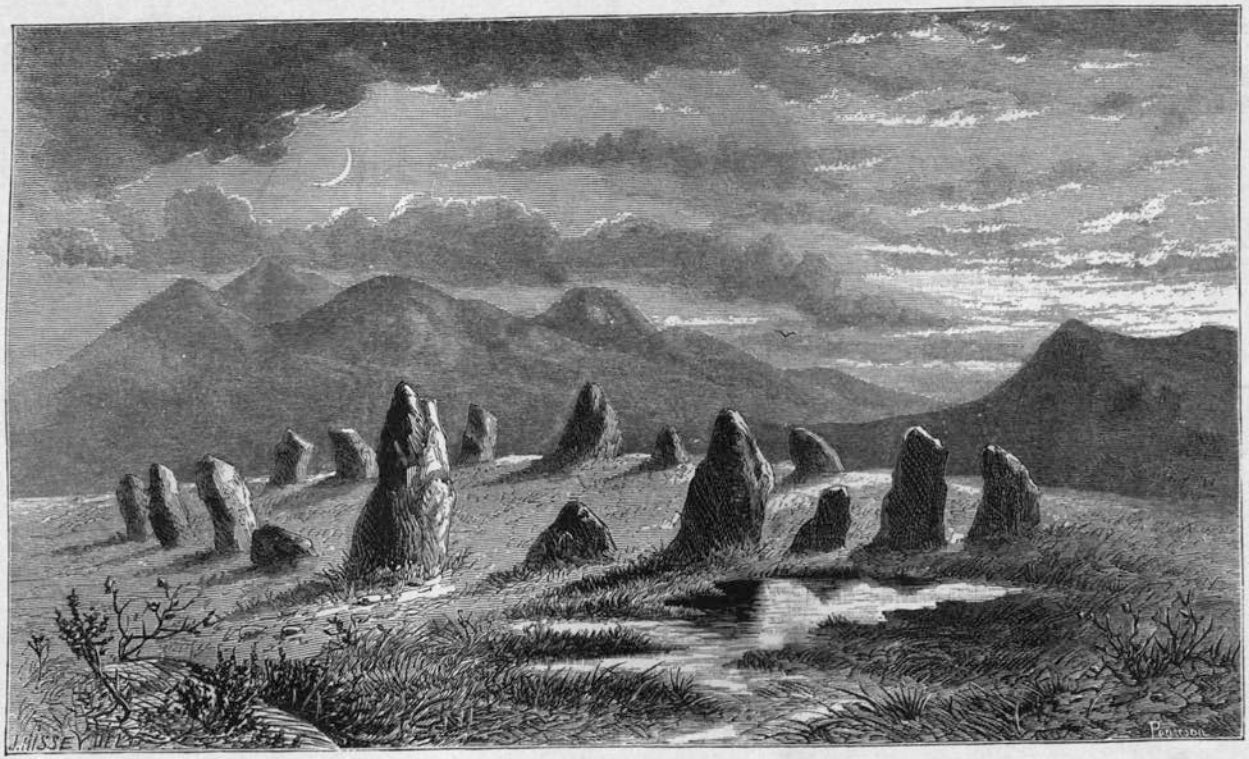
Perfect Day—The Pleasures of the Road—A Druids' Circle—The Unknown Past—An Impressive Sight—Threlkeld and its Wonderful Tarns—An Age of Fact—Grand Moorland Scenery—The Beauties of the Moors—Ullswater—Nature as a Painter—Stybarrow Crag—An Old Fight—The King of Patterdale—Brothers Water—Singular Coincidence—A Faithful Dog—Airey Force—A Difficult Task—An Antique Love Story—Dacre Castle—Eamont Bridge—Relics of Prehistoric Times—Mysterious Structures—King Arthur's Round Table—The Giants' Caves.

IT is not often one gets perfection in this world, but the next morning was as perfect as it could possibly be; it was simply a superb day; large white clouds were gaily sailing overhead in a sky of deep pure blue, causing a play of light and shadow across the hills and dales. Fantastic wreaths of snow-white mists were wooing lovingly the lower slopes of the mountains, now rising and falling as though they soared on wings, revealing ever and again as they rose sunlit slopes of greenery, wooded knolls, stony crags and wastes, and pine-clad heights. The air, too, was deliciously cool and invigorating, and as we opened our casement window fragrant odours came wafted to us.

Out of Keswick, in the direction we were journeying, we discovered there were two roads; we selected the older and hillier of the two, for both we found were hilly, and our reason for so acting was, we

found by thus doing we should pass by a relic of prehistoric times—a Druids' circle to wit. We came suddenly upon this relic of the unknown past, an erection of old grey, weathered, and lichen-stained stones, situated upon a lonely wind-swept piece of ground right on the top of a fell; all around was a wilderness of mountains, standing sullen, bleak and bare, and of a cold, forbidding hue. The very tone of the landscape, as suited well the scene, was low and desolate to a degree, sombre and oppressive. Truly the ancient Druids aptly chose the spots whereon to erect their places of worship, always supposing these strange remains to be such. Here on the summit of this drear upland, in the midst of this utter loneliness, with only the peaks and the precipices of the mighty mountains visible, they raised their temple, a circle of rude unhewn monoliths. We can now never hope to know the real uses to which these strange memorials of the past were put. Primitive man, or priest, or astronomer, or whoever raised them in the far-off ages of the long ago, left no tablets of stones engraved—or at any rate none have ever been discovered, and most probably none ever existed—with hieroglyphics or other lettering, however rude, to help us to learn more about them.

Without doubt, as Dr. Johnson has remarked, 'They are the most ancient works of man extant upon our island;' all the rest about them is dim and uncertain. Arguments have been urged to prove they were employed for astronomical purposes. Cæsar says, 'The Druids could predict eclipses with great



DRUIDICAL CIRCLE, NEAR KESWICK.

certainty,' and that is nearly all the positive information concerning them we have; but even that little proves that these ancestors of ours were not absolutely the ignorant barbarians some have supposed. There is one fact that may be considered to substantiate the astronomical theory—namely, at Stonehenge as well as here, and at most other such structures, some distance apart from the circle stands a solitary monolith, and exactly over this the sun rises on Midsummer Day. This may be accidental or it may not. It appears to me that from the situation of these puzzling and curious remains, they were eminently suited for observing the heavens, being placed on bleak moorlands, uplands, or plains, where the sky prospect is both extensive and uninterrupted. This circumstance would, however, also harmonize with a favourite theory of my own—viz. that they were actually temples of worship, and that the sun was the god worshipped.

Looking upon these ancient, time-stained, weather-worn stones, a feeling of mystery came over us, an awe was upon the place, the spirit of the past incumbent brooded over it:

> Skirted with unhewn stone, it awes my soul
> As if the very genius of the place
> Himself appeared, and with terrific tread
> Stalk'd through this drear domain.

Who invoked this structure into existence, who and when, and wherefore? Here the imagination has full play; a glamour of romance hangs over it; the unknown has always an uncertain, indescribable fascination for us. How changed has become this

England of ours—the whole world, since these hoary old stones were first erected here! And yet as we stood there we probably looked upon much the same scene the ancient Druids did. The rugged mountains stand now as they stood then; the desolate fell could not be more desolate of old; all have changed but they.

What has always been an enigma to me in respect to these structures is, that if the Druids really raised them (as most probably they did), why, as they were so learned in the art of astronomy, and therefore presumably advanced in other sciences, did they rear such rude piles? Some of the transverse stones at Stonehenge were hollowed out to receive the top of the upright ones, but no cement or mortar appears to have been used. The mere moving and elevating of ponderous monoliths seem to have offered no great difficulty to them; it is somewhat strange, therefore, that those who could do all this, and possessed considerable knowledge of a difficult subject, should have been content with such rough structures.

Our road now—with many ups and downs—took us to the little hamlet of Threlkeld, with its old ruined hall, a portion of which is now converted into a farmhouse. This one-time fine mansion was, in the reign of Henry VII., the residence of Sir Lancelot Threlkeld, a renowned and valiant knight, and who here gave shelter and a secure retreat to the 'shepherd lord.' Sir Lancelot boasted 'he had three noble houses—one for pleasure and hunting, Crosby to wit; one for profit and warmth, Tanwith;

and one for a stronghold, Threlkeld.' Each one of these is now a farmhouse. This tiny village lies at the foot of the stern Blencathara. This mountain, which rose so stately above us, is famous for two extraordinary tarns, one of which, if tradition is to be relied on, is so hemmed in by 'yawning gulfs' that the stars may be seen reflected in it at mid-day :—

> Never sunbeam could discern
> The surface of that sable tarn,
> In whose black mirror you may spy
> The stars while noontide lights the sky.

The other, Bowscale Tarn, is, or was, noted for two immortal trout which served to amuse the banished lord, who, disguised as a shepherd, used to tend the sheep upon this mountain wild :—

> And both the undying fish that swim
> In Bowscale Tarn did wait on him,
> . . . . . .
> They moved about in open sight,
> To and fro for his delight.

There was a certain Welsh tarn also famous for its never-dying trout; but unfortunately for the legendary romance, the waters from some lead mines found their way into it; the immortal fish could not stand the indignity, they became mortal, and died. What became of the Bowscale fish I know not; they have at any rate become invisible to mortal eyes, nor does the unfathomable tarn any longer possess that qualification. This is an age of fact, not romance—of stern reality, not poetry. Nowadays, amongst us live people who dispute the very existence of King Arthur, Wilhelm Tell, &c., and some

are even to be found who argue that Shakespeare did not write the plays ascribed to him. Doubt and unbelief are almost as hurtful as superstition. Faith has raised such 'poems in stones' as Tintern, Bolton, Fountains, and countless other abbeys, cathedrals, &c.; what has un-faith done—what can un-faith do? Superstition, with all its faults, was a grander thing than the cold, lifeless unbelief of the present day.

Once more our road began to mount, and it led us over some fine moorlands, with beautiful and extensive prospects all around. We were traversing a wilderness of purple heather, sprinkled with innumerable grey and weather-bleached boulders; and besides the heather, the moor was covered with long lank grasses which waved before the summer wind like a sea of green varied by yellow mosses and black peaty soil, suggestive of treacherous bogs; a vast undulating breadth, in which lonely pools every here and there made gleams of silvery light, like bits of fallen sky, and which contrasted powerfully with the dark soil around. It was a grand drive, a dome of blue overhead, and the circling mountains around alone limited our vision. The invigorating freshness, the lightness, the purity and tonic properties of the air of these heathery wildernesses are most exhilarating; they buoy up the spirits, and make even the mere fact of existing a pleasure. The clearness of the atmosphere and the brilliancy of colour is everywhere remarkable; the purple of the heather, the gold of the gorse, the green of the grass, the yellow of the mosses, and the red and brown of the bracken,

the neutral grey and white of the rocks, the gem-like sparkling of the streams and pools, the intense blue of the wind-swept sky, and the ultramarine of the distant mountains, form altogether a wonderful study of colour—a rich, harmonious whole. Then the solitude and the silence of these vast upland wastes are most impressive; no life or movement is visible save the clouds overhead and the falling of distant mountain streams, looking like so many moving silver threads. The stillness was almost painful, and but for the crunching noise of our wheels on the rough roads, which sounded strangely loud, the silence was complete. Even the vast cloud-shadows as they flitted by seemed unnatural, because they showed movement without sound, and the gleams of sunlight as they came and went gave grand effects. I know of nothing—not even the wide sea—that gives to the mind such a sense of freedom and unlimited space, such a picture of wild and remote solitude, as do these moorlands. The eye rejoices to range unconstrained, and exults over the illimitable prospect they afford.

From our elevated position, after several miles of grand driving we descended abruptly to Ullswater, the upper reach of the lake and stately-shaped mountains at its head coming into view to great advantage during the descent, from the bottom of which to Patterdale we continued along by the margin of the mere, and a beautiful stretch of road it was.

As we journeyed along we were enchanted with the beauty of the wooded slopes. The lady-like silvery birch, the graceful rowan tree, mingled with

larches, stout oaks, and sturdy red-trunked pines, which with other woods made up a slope of green loveliness not to be easily blotted out of our memory; and adown and through the lambent leaves of the stilly foliage how softly the sunshine shone, and how the countless leaf shadows trembled and danced upon the ground! And the grey lichen-laden and moss-begrown rocks about too, how picturesque they looked all lying around in a delightful confusion, and between the rocks flourished many a graceful fern, the hart's tongue and the oak fern being conspicuous amongst the number, and everywhere the tall bracken abounded. There were here great landscapes, looking across the lake to the mighty hills beyond, and little gems at our feet. Nature's picture-gallery is a very varied one.

As we proceeded on our way we passed under Stybarrow Crag. Round this fine projecting precipice formerly there existed only a narrow uneven path, and this spot was the scene in olden times of a miniature battle, a sort of local Waterloo. It appears that the dalesmen in these parts hearing that the Scots had entered Westmoreland on a predatory expedition, gathered together their forces to resist the invaders, but being of a generally peaceful disposition they had no leader skilled in war. However, one Mounsey, a herdsman, volunteered to lead them; his services were accepted; he placed his men with great judgment to defend the Stybarrow Crag pass, where

> A hundred men might hold the post
> With hardihood against a host.

The Scots, with less judgment—possibly they made the oft-repeated mistake of holding their foes in too great a contempt—attacked the dalesmen on the spot, and were totally defeated. Mounsey, for the generalship and valour he displayed, was then and there crowned by acclamation King of Patterdale, which title continued to his successors for long years, though now I believe it is extinct, and the inhabitants of the once secluded valley acknowledge the kingly or queenly succession of the United Kingdom as established by Act of Parliament.

In the evening we took a stroll up the valley to Brothers Water, a large tarn hemmed in by striking looking mountains, making altogether a fine picture. The walk was a pleasant one; on one side of us the mountains were glowing with the rich warm colouring of the setting sun, whilst on the other they loomed up in shade of a dark grey hue, the mountain silence being broken by the mysterious voices of distant cataracts; and the nearer falls and streams gurgling and leaping from rock to rock gave life to an otherwise desolate scene. In this tarn two brothers were drowned in the year 1785, and, strangely enough, a similar occurrence took place some time previously; from this fact, the guide-books state, the lake is named. Whether or not such is the case is at any rate doubtful, for the original appellation of the tarn was Broader Water, which might easily have become corrupted, and converted into its present title.

Returning to the village, though the gloom of

twilight was gathering fast around, we rambled into the churchyard; it was the very hour for such a visit—a stray bat and an uncanny owl both greeted us. The church itself is of recent date, and though of pleasing and suitable elevation, and harmonizing well with its surroundings, is of little interest. To us it was of none whatever; in a couple of hundred years or so, when its walls have become toned down and mellowed with age, when Father Time has painted it with weather stains, and given it a certain flavour of antiquity, then the artists of those days may make a picture of it. In the churchyard here rest the remains of Charles Gough, who met his death on the drear Helvellyn. He was crossing over that mountain from Patterdale in the spring of 1805, his sole companion being his dog, when he lost his way, and was starved to death on the hill top. His melancholy fate has given rise to two fine and well-known poems, respectively composed by Scott and Wordsworth. It appears it was nearly three months before the search parties succeeded in discovering his body, and when they eventually found it, his faithful dog was there by the side of his late master, alive, and keeping watch over it.

> Yes, proof was plain, that since the day
> On which the traveller thus had died,
> The dog had watched about the spot
> Or by his master's side:
> How nourished there through such long time
> He knows who gave that love sublime.

We rose early the next morning, but not so early that the sun had not risen some time before us, gilding the mountains, struggling successfully with

the clouds for supremacy, and turning the leaden-lined lake of the previous night into one of pale amber. The air was cool and fresh; our aneroid was at 'fair,' and inclined to rise, so we had every prospect of fine weather for our day's pilgrimage, and we were grateful accordingly. The mists were creeping slowly up the mountain slopes, wreath after wreath ascending; distant peaks before invisible began to appear, and now and again a fitful breeze for a moment ruffled the glassy surface of the lake, which otherwise repeated the mountains in double upon its mirror-like surface.

The weather seemed determined to smile on us, and, as we proceeded on our way, the mists gradually dispersed, and we had once again a clear, cloudless sky. Where a stream crosses the road we called a halt, to inspect the charming Airey Force—a picturesque fall, situated in a deep, rocky glen, shaded with overhanging trees, and crossed by two rustic bridges. Altogether, the fine rocks, the shady foliage, the ample volume of water, its secluded and romantic position, make this a gem amongst waterfalls; and when we saw it, the effect of the sunlight on the showers of silvery spray, causing them to glow with prismatic colours, was exceedingly beautiful. I tried, and tried hard, to transfer the effect to paper, and failed; it was one of the most difficult struggles I ever had with Nature—the many ever-varying rainbow tints were too many for me.

The chasm which this fall has excavated for itself is a very fine and striking one. Connected with this spot is a touching story. Long centuries

ago, in a stately castle near this fall, dwelt a lady of high degree and great beauty. Her accepted suitor, one Sir Richard Eglamore, a valiant knight, both brave and handsome, had sailed for Palestine, to join there the Crusaders. Years had passed without any tidings from him, and his lady fair, deeming him dead, used to ramble daily in melancholy mood to the rocks above Airey Force, where she had bidden her faithful knight adieu. It, however, so happened Sir Eglamore was not killed, but alive and well, though, as there was no letter-post in those benighted days, and submarine cables were still uninvented, the fact had not become known; and he, returning therefore unexpectedly, had intended to betake himself to the castle, and there surprise his own true love. On his way he had to pass the fall, and when so doing, to his astonishment, he beheld on the rocks above the lady of his heart. In his joy he shouted to her; she, in her delight and surprise at the sound of the well-known and long-unheard voice, gave a sudden, startled jump, and, losing her footing, fell over the precipice into the boiling caldron of water below, and was drowned before the brave knight's very eyes. He, broken-hearted, straightway built himself a rude cell overlooking the spot, and lived and died there a lonely hermit.

Leaving Airey Force, we continued on our way by the side of the lake to Pooley Bridge—a fine drive. Shortly before the latter place we noticed on our map, about two miles off from our road, the ruins of Dacre Castle, marked worth a visit, if only to see how wonderful are the changes wrought by

time. Here lived the once warlike, mighty, and dread family of the Dacres, who earned their proud title from the military exploits and valiant deeds of arms of one of the early barons of the family at the siege of Acre under Richard Cœur de Lion. Hence the title D'Acre—a name that was once terrible and all-powerful in this part of the country. And now their stern old stronghold, that once received the sovereigns of Scotland and Cumberland, who actually did homage here after defeat in battle, is a heap of ruins; its moat is dried up, its massive towers, that have so long survived their uses, are but crumbling masonry; its ruined walls are still struggling with time; its strength is gone.

Proceeding on our way, we came, near to Eamont Bridge, upon two very remarkable relics of the unknown and pre-historic past. The first one, close to the high road, called King Arthur's Round Table, consists of a trenched amphitheatre, with two approaches through a large circular mound of earth. It is generally supposed that on this spot the gallants of other days wrought deeds of high emprise, and vindicated the honour of knighthood by achievements in arms; but this conjecture is by no means satisfactory to my mind. The place is only about twenty yards in diameter, and therefore far too limited for tilting or other deeds of like valour. Near this, but higher up on a wooded eminence, is another mysterious structure of a somewhat similar character. This also consists of a rounded enclosure, formed by a very substantial mound of stones and earth raised to a considerable height and now grass-grown. An

entrance is cut through this of some dozen yards in width. Though, like Stonehenge, the real uses to which these singular places were put must ever remain a mystery, still I venture an opinion that these structures were not patronized by the knights of old, being of too primitive a nature for such grand feats as were indulged in by them, but by the humbler classes, who here would compete in athletic exercises, such as wrestling, throwing and lifting heavy weights, and such-like sports. Scott mentions these remains in his 'Bridal of Triermain,' and his opinion as to their uses I cannot quote in support of my theory, as he is altogether in favour of the warriors and the Druids :—

> He pass'd by Penrith's table round,
> For feats of chivalry renowned,
> Left Mayborough's mound and stones of power,
> By Druids raised in magic hour.

Some little distance on the other side of Eamont Bridge, on the north bank of the river, in the face of a precipitous rock, are two strange excavations. The only way to these is along the narrow and slippery sides of the cliff, and the difficult climb is hardly sufficiently rewarded. The local names of these caverns are the Giants' Caves. The first is very small, but the second one is of a considerable size. It is, however, unpleasantly dismal and damp, the moisture dropping incessantly from the roof. There are signs that the larger cavern has been inhabited, the sides of the rock still retaining marks of iron grating or bolts, and there are traces of a window. Who lived here, and wherefore the party in question

chose this secluded retreat, so difficult of access, history is silent, but tradition is not. When facts are uncertain then legends abound, and tradition asserts this cavern was once the abode of a remarkable giant, who from time to time issued forth from his den, and seizing both men and cattle, returned there with his prey and devoured it. Of course he was the terror of the whole country round about. Some legends further say that the giant in question was eventually slain by Sir Launcelot de Lake.

From Eamont Bridge we drove on to Penrith, and next day proceeded to Carlisle, and so on, over the border to Moffat, in Scotland, where we remained over a week, to give our hardly-worked horses a thorough and well-earned rest; which portion of our journey need not be here described, as we repeated the road as far as Penrith on our return home.

CHAPTER XVI.

At Moffat—Sunday Reading and a Sunday Bargain—Southward Bound—Ugly Churches—A Baby Castle—Castle Johnson—A Forsaken Road—Lockerby—Landlords and Landladies—Inns in the 'North Countrie'—A Neglected part of Scotland—Ecclefechan—A Romantic Old Castle—A Wayside Hostelrie—A Relic of the Old Coaching Days—Gretna Green—An Old Bridge—A Storm Imminent—An Artistic Hotel—An American's Opinion of the same—Petrified Potatoes—Carlisle Cathedral and Castle—A Mountainous Prospect—A Curious Wayside Erection—An Old-world Village—A Curious Toll—'A Carriage Propelled by Machinery'—Going to Ruin—Penrith.

At Moffat we took up our quarters at the Hydropathic Establishment, a fine building well situated on a height close to the town. Here we managed to put through a week very well; but a week was enough for us, and we were not sorry when the time came to re-commence our journey.

The people who patronized the Establishment all appeared to enjoy most excellent health; certainly they did not seem in any way to belong to the invalid or delicate class. We had fairly-acted charades and somewhat tame dances in the evenings, everyone appearing to dance to a step of his own particular choosing. What with lawn-tennis, bowls, mountain rambles, excursions, and baths all day long, everybody's time was well occupied; on wet days the baths appeared to be a great resource.

From here we took our departure on a Monday,

and the afternoon of the previous Sunday, as I was quietly sitting in the drawing-room, hunting up our homeward route by the aid of 'Paterson,' a young engineer from Glasgow, a good-hearted fellow, whose acquaintance we had made during our stay, came and took a seat by my side, and asked what book it was I was so intently reading. I showed him the volume in question, which he glanced at and said, 'It is not a Sunday book, at least not one that *I* should read on that day.' I was both considerably amused and surprised at his remarks, for I could see no harm in 'Paterson.' However, I closed the obnoxious book, and we commenced a long chat. He was an enthusiast in his profession, and we were presently in the midst of a long and engrossing discussion about iron girders, embankments, bridge building, facing points, permanent way, &c., &c., a discussion which lasted considerably over an hour, and at the end of which I ventured to remark that there was evidently no harm in talking about such week-day subjects on Sundays, the only wickedness lay in reading about them. Rather a hair-splitting distinction it seemed to me. This little incident forcibly reminded me of the story of the worthy Scotch farmer, who, returning from kirk one Sabbath in company with another brother tiller of the soil, said to his companion, 'Donald, just supposin' it were Monday, what wad ye tak' for yer coo?' To which query the business-like Donald replied, 'Supposin' it were Monday, I wad tak' sax pun' ten.' The first speaker then said, 'Supposin' it were Monday, I'd gie sax pun'.' Donald again responded, 'Supposin' it were

Monday, I'd tak' sax pun'.' And so the bargain was concluded on the Sabbath-day, the cow duly delivered and paid for the next morning, each party having a clear conscience.

A warm autumn noon, after rain, saw us once more on the road southward bound. The sky was clear and luminous, being well washed and wind-swept by a prolonged thunderstorm of the previous night; the mountains around told out sharp and dark against the deep blue above; low-lying grey clouds still, however, hovered suspiciously about their summits, and we felt the weather was not to be altogether trusted. We started in warm sunshine; a soft, south-west wind greeted us pleasantly, though somewhat suggestive of further rain; but little we heeded the weather—*Carpe diem* was our motto. Were we not again commencing our delightful pilgrimage of some hundreds of miles through the very heart of fair England, nearly all before us new, fresh, and unknown? We drove along through the village of Moffat, past the pretty public lawn-tennis and croquet grounds, past the market-place, with its curious drinking-fountain in the centre, on past its ugly churches, and—no offence to any gallant Scotchman—they do know how to build ugly churches in the 'North countrie,' and so on to the fair country roads.

Shortly after leaving Moffat we passed the ruins of an old tower erected, we were informed, in far-off times, to keep the English out of this valley; though how such a small, unimportant baby castle could have been of much service in actual war puzzled us



NEAR MOFFAT.

not a little. Still, whatever it may have been as a stronghold in its palmy days, as a ruin in its old age it is undoubtedly a very picturesque object, and we found it made a capital water-colour sketch, with the dark purple mountains around Moffat for a background, amongst which Hartfell made himself conspicuous, though I do not suppose the builders of old ever had a thought when raising this pile of affording a subject for a nineteenth-century artist.

Passing directly afterwards over a quaint old time-toned stone bridge, with a stream tumbling and foaming over the dark rocks beneath in fine style, we found ourselves in sight of the iron-way, and the iron horses were evidently somewhat fresh, for the noise and screeching they made considerably upset our steeds' equanimity, and we had some little trouble to quiet them down again; however, in about a mile we bade farewell to our iron rival, and our horses, warming to their work, went steadily along.

About four miles from Moffat we pulled up and looked round about for 'the beautiful ruins of Castle Johnson,' which we had been told to be sure not to miss, as they stood close to the roadside, and were well worth a visit. We had proceeded some distance, yet there was no sign anywhere about of any castle, ruined or otherwise; then for a moment the unwelcome idea struck us that perhaps we had blundered, and had taken the wrong road, leading to Dumfries instead of to Carlisle; but an old milestone, much the worse for age, by the roadside close to us, on a careful inspection reassured us, as we could just manage to trace on it, 'To Carlisle 36 miles.' Un-

fortunately there was no cottage near nor anyone in sight to solve the mystery of the sudden disappearance of the ruins. We were just about to proceed, when over a stile hard by came an intelligent Scotch laddie, who pointed us the way along a by-path. So we went in search of the old castle; it came into sight almost immediately, having been curiously hidden from the main road by a dense clump of trees.

I had my sketch-book ready, but it was of no use, for of the ruins there remains a mere fragment of a fragment of a tower; and as to setting itself up for an old ruined keep, &c. (see local guide-books), all I can say is, Castle Johnson is a great impostor. The spot itself is, however, very beautiful, just the place for a picnic, being considerably raised above the country round about, and still sheltered and surrounded by fine old timber. From here is a charming and extensive view; we did not, however, remain long to admire the varying landscape that lay spread out before us, lovely though it was, for red, thundery-looking clouds were gathering over the mountain ranges to the north, and we had some eleven miles before us ere we reached our night's destination.

The road now began to lose its wild, hilly character, and the more peaceful pastoral scenery of the Lowlands commenced. It was one of great beauty; trees on both sides of us formed a continuous avenue for miles. It was as though we were driving through some noble park of vast extent; the straight columns of the trees, the arching, interlacing branches overhead formed quite a lengthened Gothic aisle; nor

did ever light through painted glass come with softer or more restful colours of green and gold than did the sunlight through the foliage above. On each side of the way was a beautiful stretch of sward, just the perfection for a canter or a gallop; but with all its beauties it was a desolate road—we met or passed no one. In the old times this was the mail route from London and England generally to Glasgow and the West of Scotland, and was doubtless busy and gay enough then. Now all is silent where erst was eager haste; deserted now is the once well-beaten track; no more is heard the coach's cheery horn, the sound of its crunching wheels, the musical rattle of the harness, &c., and the swift but steady trot, trot, a-trot of its fast-travelling team.

Railways have killed road travel, and the present generation hardly know their loss. True, those to whom it is given to ride bicycles, or even tricycles, travel far and wide, but more attention has to be given to the machine than to the scenery, or an accident would be the probable result; nor, as a rule, is their seat sufficiently high to obtain an uninterrupted view over hedges, &c. Having ridden the iron horse some hundreds of miles I speak from some experience. For thorough enjoyment and properly seeing the country through which one journeys, I can imagine nothing half so perfect as the old mail-coach, and after that a phaeton perhaps stands next, though some distance behind.

However, enough of this rambling; yonder is surely the steeple of Lockerby Church, and we shall soon have to decide which hostelrie there shall be

our abiding place for the night. The entrance to Lockerby certainly did not favourably impress us; it has a cold forbidding look; nor did the place improve on near acquaintance. The houses all look bleak and bare, being stone-built and without exception devoid of ornament or even a suspicion of such, reminding one of a series of square boxes with so many square holes in them doing duty for windows.

We drove round the little town, as was our wont, to inspect the hotels (if any) before making our choice. In this case we had little difficulty in deciding upon our hostelrie, and we at once drove up to the King's Arms. As there was no one visible, I descended and prospected about for either landlord or landlady. Presently the former was unearthed. 'Could we have rooms for the night and accommodation for our horses?' I inquired. 'Well,' replied that worthy individual, 'I am no' quite sure; you see we is full up with commercial gents, but I'll ask the missus what she can do.' And then mine host disappeared, and presently his wife, a cheery Scotch dame, came forth, to whom I repeated my query. 'She was very sorry, but really they were full; however, as she had not the heart to turn any one away, especially as we were travelling by road, and it was late and getting dark, if she could anyhow possibly manage to accommodate us she would do so; at any rate, she would do her best for us, if we would be satisfied.' Satisfied? Of course we would, with the vision of the two other doubtful inns in the place before us, the gathering clouds around suggestive of a storm, the long stage to the next town,

with the uncertainty of there being any accommodation there. We felt we might easily 'jump out of the frying-pan into the fire,' although, judging by outside appearances, our inn was not all we could have desired, so the horses were at once driven round to the stable yard and were soon being unharnessed.

Whilst we were thus waiting in expectation, I was much amused at overhearing a conversation, or rather an attempted conversation, between our groom and the ostler. Our man, it appears, was asking for something, I have forgotten now what, and the worthy ostler replied to him in the broadest of broad Scotch. I need scarcely say the Northern dialect was wasting its sweetness on the desert air, for during a long explanation our groom kept interrupting with, 'I can't understand you. I'm blest if I can make out a word you say;' and not procuring what he required, he went away evidently to hunt for the article himself, muttering the while very disrespectful things about foreign languages. I was too much amused to interfere, though with some little trouble and a few guesses I could make the ostler out fairly well, but it was not altogether an easy matter.

But to return to our hotel. The landlord in due course came out, and asked us if we would come inside, where his wife received us, and ushered us into a most cosy sitting-room, which we had all to ourselves—an unexpected luxury—and we found there quite a sumptuous tea laid out for us, and looking most inviting. A good, kind-hearted soul was that landlady! and how pleased she seemed when we thanked her for the trouble she had taken

for our comforts. I verily believe the good creature had given up her own private sitting-room for us.

Nothing has struck or pleased me more than the universal kindness and thoughtful attentions we have received (with but few exceptions) almost everywhere during our many driving tours, from both landlords and landladies of the various inns we have stopped at from time to time. A feeling was ours of being more a welcome guest than a strange traveller sojourning at a strange inn; we felt we had received a something not included in the mere payment of our bill. Not by any means unfrequently on leaving little country inns has madam been presented with a bouquet of flowers on wishing good-bye to the landlady, and frequently both host and hostess have come to the door, in the good old-fashioned style, to bid us farewell and a hearty wish for a pleasant journey; such wishes being evidently genuine and not given out of a formal politeness. Perchance it was journeying by road, and not being in the feverish hurry of travellers in general, made everything seem so pleasant and spiced with a flavour of the best traditions of the olden times; but whatever the reason may be, so it was.

I must say, both in Scotland and in the North of England generally, and Yorkshire in particular, the hotels do know how to treat the hungry traveller; those in the South, as a rule, unfortunately, afford a sad contrast in this respect. One must be hard to please indeed who cannot make a good meal of crisp oat cakes, fresh scones, and real brown and honest white bread (often all these home baked), with hot

porridge, cool cream, and delicious new milk, broiled herrings, and honey in the comb all fragrant of Highland heather, with cold meat of some sort or another; and lastly, but not by any means least, capital coffee and fair tea. Such meals are the rule not the exception in the North, at least so we found. The very variety of the food is pleasing and appetizing; perhaps one's taste requires educating to appreciate the porridge, but the keen bracing Scotch air usually gives that education. We had to put up with rather a stuffy bedroom, but everything therein was scrupulously clean, and so we slept soundly that night beneath the sign of the King's Arms at Lockerby.

Early next morning we were out prospecting the weather. Our aneroid was steady and inclined to rise, and though cloudy still, no rain had fallen; above us soft pearly grey clouds were sailing along, and the sun every now and again shone out quite cheerily. After ordering breakfast I went out with 'mine host' to inspect his stables by daylight, and was surprised to find accommodation for thirty or more horses, though when he told me this had been one of the old coaching inns I did not wonder so much. By ten o'clock the weather gave signs of being not only very fine but hot also, and we started along a capital road in the best of spirits. The views around for many miles were of enchanting beauty; fresh green meadows, rocky rivers, sunny glades, sunlit wooded slopes with frequent peeps of dark blue hills beyond, made a landscape fair to see. This portion of Scotland is but little if at all visited by tourists;

it is surprising that such an interesting part of the country should be so neglected.

Just before reaching Ecclefechan, a pretty village, very favourably situated, though it has such an outlandish name, and one difficult for a Southern tongue properly to pronounce, we passed a charming castle romantically perched high up on a rocky cliff, which cliff was well wooded towards its base, and a tawny-coloured river at the foot went swirling and gurgling along, tumbling noisily over its boulder-strewn bed, gambolling from rock to rock, delighting the ear with the sound of its wild music; a prettier or more fishful-looking river you could not imagine. It would be difficult for a painter to conjure up a more delightful retreat, were he bidden to realize his beau-ideal of what such a spot should be. The country all around was richly wooded, and the woods were of every variety of colouring. Artistic autumn had tinted the foliage with her magic hand.

A few miles more brought us to Kirtlebridge, a mere hamlet of some dozen cottages or so; but luckily and unexpectedly we discovered here a cosy little wayside hostelrie, and, moreover, we found it had some excellent stabling attached to it; the place had, however, a forsaken look, as though it boasted of but little custom. Although there were stables there was no ostler; in fact, we never expected to find one, being only too rejoiced to get quarters of any kind for our horses. So I set to work to help the man to unharness the steeds, and whilst we groomed them and got the unused stalls ready, I went in search of the necessary hay and corn, the landlady (there

apparently was no landlord) having given me the key of the loft, &c., and asked me to get all I required.

Inside our little inn we were surprised to find a bright cheerful sitting-room situated upstairs (the geography of the house was somewhat peculiar), and although the only fare we could obtain was bread and cheese and bottled ale, it was served so nicely, and on such a scrupulously clean cloth, that we thoroughly enjoyed our repast; and, after all, bread and cheese and ale do not form a meal to be lightly despised by the hungry traveller. It was the landlady's daughter who waited upon us, a lively Scotch lassie, possessing a wonderful power of conversation—in fact, she appeared delighted to have a stranger to talk to, and I must say she took full advantage of her opportunity.

Her life here we thought must be a very dull and monotonous one. We found she was well-informed, and the anecdotes she told of the old coaching days, handed down by tradition from her father and those who kept the inn before him, when all was life and bustle here, and not stagnation as now, were well worth hearing—especially charming did they seem as related in the winning Lowland tongue. One remnant, she informed us, of those departed days still existed here in the shape of a faithful old servant, a decrepit old ostler, a very ancient fossil, the last of his race on this road, as far as Scotland is concerned, and who was remembered in the late landlord's will to be provided for and taken care of in his old age. Such faithful old

servants are rare nowadays; everlasting change is the order of our time. But is the world really so much better off and happier, Mr. Political Economist? You say yes, so I suppose it must be. Still, the gain is not all gain; with the profit some loss has come.

Curiosity prompted me to go in search of this worthy, and I soon found him in the stables. He had evidently seen or heard of the arrival of our horses and had quickly followed them. He was an aged man, somewhat inclined to be prosy, full of regrets and tales of the past in which he lived; he simply existed in the present, it had no charms for him. However, the past is past, for weal or woe, the present a very real reality; so we thought as over the viaduct close by thundered the Northern mail train at lightning speed, leaving behind it some wreaths of slowly dispersing steam and a distinct odour of sulphur. How often had other mails travelled over the low unpretending bridge many yards below; how picturesque did the old grey weather-tinted stone 'brig' look; how ugly and yet how eminently business-like did the higher railway structure appear!

The road on to Carlisle continued for some way well wooded and full of interest; but by degrees the scenery completely changed, the woods grew fewer, then totally disappeared, and the country assumed a wild, bleak character. The weather too changed to suit the scene; dark suspicious-looking clouds began to gather overhead, and away to the right a silvery sheen, a streak of glittering light, told us we were

not far from the sea. It was a desolate spot in which to be caught in a storm, and so we hurried along, so fast, indeed, that we nearly passed the far-famed Gretna Green without knowing it. Romantic as the traditions of this place may be, it certainly looks prosaic enough now; and yet if the walls of that old cottage close by the road could only speak, what exciting episodes might they not relate? Truly Gretna Green is one of the institutions of the past that none would care to recall; how it lasted as long as it did is certainly a mystery.

Directly after leaving Gretna we crossed the river Sark and entered England. The wild aspect of the scenery still continued; if possible, it grew even bleaker, and anyone not knowing the direction we were journeying in, would in all probability have imagined, judging solely by appearances, we were crossing the border into Scotland, instead of travelling the reverse way. The weather continued to wear a forbidding look, and we consequently rattled along apace. The river Esk was soon reached, and this we crossed on a fine old iron bridge, an enterprising piece of engineering considering the time of its erection, though it seems a pity, even supposing the traffic over it to be very small, that it should be left to take care of itself, which means going to rust and ruin, as it appeared to us to be doing.

The wind now began to blow raw and chill, the clouds in front of us careered along at a wild pace; dark grey clouds were they, bulging with rain, and ever and anon a stray gull, uttering his peevish weird cry, flew past us, so close, indeed, one came, that it

almost touched our faces; the air from off the ocean was laden with that peculiar well-known fragrance that comes alone from the sea. Everything foreboded a storm, and we slackened not our pace. The famed Black or Scotch Dyke was soon passed, and quickly the merry city of Carlisle came into view. However, just then it did not look very merry, for the heavy weather kept the smoke down, and this hung over the place quite *à la* Sheffield, and we hurried on to escape, if possible, the approaching downpour. To our surprise on entering the town we found our hurrying had nearly brought us into the full of it, for the streets were running down with water, the gutters being converted into miniature torrents, and muddy ones too, and a policeman of whom we inquired as to the best hotel with stabling, told us it had only just left off raining 'cats and dogs.'

The result of our consultation with the policeman was that we drove up to the Bush Hotel, as we concluded from what he said we should find quite comfortable quarters there. We found there was no inn in the place with stabling attached, so after our belongings had been removed from the phaeton, we had to drive about in search of some livery stables, and as both our horses and selves were tired it was not a very agreeable occupation; however, eventually we managed to get our steeds comfortably housed.

We discovered the 'Bush' to be, as we were informed, a small quiet hostelrie, a modern edifice in the so-called Queen Anne style (which title seems

to cover a multitude of sins architecturally speaking); however, we found the interior, staircase, chimney-pieces, windows, of pleasing and artistic design, and furniture, papers, &c., all in keeping, save the waiter, who was of the ordinary type, and seemed somewhat out of keeping with his surroundings. An American we met here was not so pleased with the place as we were. 'It's all very well, your Elizabethan or Mary Annean, or whatever you call it architecture,' he remarked, 'but you should have your waiters to match. Now that fellow ought to have a Mary Annean coat on, with a blue tile let in at the back; and, speaking of tiles, I rather guess if those old buffers of the middle ages ever expected we duffers of the nineteenth century were going to copy them, they would have learnt to draw, and besides, the thing is not half complete. You ought to have small diamond windows set in lead, and not plate glass.' So tastes and opinions differ, but I guess also, if 'the buffers of the middle ages' had known how to make plate glass they would have made it, although, except for large shop windows, I personally have no especial regard or fancy for that article. The modern builder delights in it, but those who live in his houses, I observe, do their best to mitigate its bareness with lace and other curtains. Small panes (in moderation of course), and the wooden divisions they necessitate, give the idea of an enclosed space; a large square hole filled with plate glass simply gives the impression of a void to be somehow partially covered or hidden. And as to the old tiles, well, perhaps the perspective of them generally is not quite what it should be; nay, I may

at once honestly confess, the drawing is often exceedingly faulty; but it should be remembered they were painted for decorative effect, and not to hang against walls like pictures; and the best proof that 'the old buffers' knew what they were about is, that when used for what they are intended their artistic and decorative effect is beyond question.

The Queen Anne architecture, falsely so called, of the present day is by no means perfection; its title is a misnomer, for, speaking generally, it is a conglomeration, and not, by the way, an inharmonious one, of Elizabethan, Gothic, and Queen Anne styles with classic details, and a good deal of Dutch work thrown in. But though not perfect in itself, it is a vast improvement upon what preceded it; it is a forward step in the right direction, and it is in every way superior to the characterless pseudo-classic structures Londoners were at one time doomed to put up with, in the which solemn symmetry appeared to be the end and aim of the design, whatever the interior might be like.

We were up early in the morning in order to have a good look at what was best worth seeing in the city before starting on our day's pilgrimage. The cathedral and castle are the chief objects of interest; but the roads must not be forgotten; to us they were a matter of considerable astonishment, being nearly all paved with round cobbles of various sizes, and the driving over them was consequently a treat long to be remembered. I do not like to complain without good cause, having driven over some curious roads both in England and the Western States of America

and far-off California, but for short, sharp, continuous jolting, give me the Carlisle streets. I can only compare them to a mass of petrified potatoes.

The cathedral occupies a commanding position. This building was originally intended for a conventual church of a richly endowed priory; it has suffered considerably at different times from both fire and spoliation. During the civil war it perhaps, however, suffered most; a great portion of the nave and most of the conventual buildings were then pulled down and the materials used for the erection of military barracks and storehouses, &c. Still, after all these vicissitudes, a wonderfully grand old edifice remains, hoary with antiquity, fraught with the solemness of centuries, and mellowed and toned by time, an edifice all lovers of ancient work must admire, though it exhibits a great and a too sudden contrast of architecture of two very different periods; the choir, aisles, and transept are of a high order of richly ornamented Gothic in its best period, whilst the nave and the rest of the building are of the plain, heavy, and massive Norman-Saxon type. These two very opposite styles fail to amalgamate, the transition is too abrupt.

The castle is finely situated, and is an interesting relic of the feudal times, and, as may be imagined, from its situation so near the border, has been the scene of a good deal of bloodshed and hard fighting, all of which are matters of history, and needless to discuss here. Castles are cheap and plentiful in the North, and it will not do to give too much space to a single one.

On leaving Carlisle we had some more jolting to endure, but we soon left the merry city behind, and presently found ourselves bowling along a capital road, wide and smooth, affording space enough for four coaches to drive abreast, and even to spare. It was a blessing the surface was so excellent, for otherwise the road was a heavy one, being very much up and down hill, and consequently trying to the horses. In fact, the whole of our day's journey was alternately collar work and descending. That this should be so was somewhat remarkable, as in the valley to the right, some 500 feet below us, a beautiful level road could have been constructed the whole of the way.

Nothing about the roads in the North astonished me so much as the manner in which they are taken straight over hills, when frequently a good level route for them, little if any further in distance, could have been made along the foot of the hills. I presume the roads existed in the first place as mere tracks; these possibly were kept on high ground to avoid swamps and floods; gradually the tracks became roads, were improved upon from time to time, and as they answered their purpose fairly well, and there was no opposition, the primitive pack-route was retained. But whatever the cause, we had no right to complain, for the very fact of our road being on the average of a considerable elevation gave us grand panoramic views of most of the mountain ranges and peaks of the Lake District. Knowing and loving our English mountain land as I do, I had no difficulty in making out nearly all the heights: to the

north, dimly visible, was grand old Skiddaw; then south, looming up a dark grey purple under the wild cold sky, was 'drear Helvellyn;' further south was Scawfell Pike, the highest English mountain, and Coniston Old Man, cloud-capped, brought up the rear.

About six miles from Carlisle, to the right of the road, we came across a curious erection, evidently of considerable antiquity, the why and wherefore of which we could not make out. I cannot describe it better than by saying it looked like a large tomb with a stone platform on the top; it must evidently have been built many, many years, as we noticed a tree had forced its way up from below, and emerged to light between the top flags. We stopped and carefully inspected this strange structure, but could make nothing of it; there was just a trace of an inscription up it which we imagined to read CLIII., and that was all.

Another four miles of splendid road, splendid at least as to scenery and magnificent views, brought us to the small village of Hesket, where we pulled up at the White Ox, quite a grand-looking inn for so small a village; nor was it all outside show, for the cheer within was excellent, and the stabling good, but still it was some time before we could get attended to.

They had not many travellers now the landlady told us; it had been one of the old coaching inns, and in those times a very busy and a lively place, but now they had but few visitors, and rarely ever anyone to stay overnight; in fact, it would never pay to keep it as a hotel, but the house was let with a

farm, and the farm was of more importance than the inn. Her husband and sons were all away helping to get the harvest in, and so she hoped we should be able to get the horses out and stable them ourselves. Strange to say, although a farmer's wife, she did not know where the corn or hay or straw were kept, but she said, 'You are very welcome to look about and help yourself.' So, whilst our mid-day meal was being prepared, I again assisted to unharness the horses.

It was quite an extensive and rambling stable-yard, with numerous out-buildings all of the older time and type, set around in picturesque irregularity. I judged seventy or more horses must have been kept here in past days.

After a needful wash, refreshed and with no mean appetite, I did justice to the excellent repast the worthy landlady had prepared for us, and which was helped down by some most delicious home-brewed ale, nut-brown and foaming. A quiet pipe afterwards I thought well earned, and, as the village appeared interesting, we determined to explore it. The church, which was close by the hotel, claimed our first attention. It had a quaint double belfry, and outside the building there was a curious flight of stone steps much worn by the feet of those who now sleep so peacefully in the hallowed soil below. We were rather hurt to find a number of tombstones, with carvings and inscriptions quite clear and legible, laid on one side at the back of the church, as but few of these were in any way broken or damaged. We judged they could scarcely all have fallen down;

besides, the names, dates, &c., on many of them being quite clear, proved the improbability of time being the sole leveller. On one side of the church tower was an old sun-dial, with two doleful legends as to the length of eternity and the shortness of life inscribed above.

The houses and cottages of the village were essentially commonplace: one alone called for any remark; it was the largest and best in the village, and, therefore, probably the doctor's. It was built of stone, with a rather well-carved doorway, and moreover boasted of some pretty mullioned windows. But what especially struck us was the peculiar appearance of the building. The doorway and the mullions of the windows were painted black, contrasting strangely with the rest of the house, which was whitewashed. The place looked as if it were in mourning.

Hesket boasted of a toll-gate and a toll-chain to a side-road, and it is to the toll-chain I wish, kind reader, to call your attention. The list of tolls we could just make out. They had evidently many years ago been painted on the board, and I daresay touched up from time to time. I cannot of course give the age of the board, but judging from appearances (which in this case could hardly be deceptive), I should say it was in existence before railways were known, at any rate in this part of the country, where even now the people appear half asleep; and this fact makes the following extract from the list of tolls of some interest, at any rate to the curious. It runs, then, as follows: 'For every carriage drawn or propelled by machinery the sum of one shilling for each

wheel.' Now, that simple toll set me thinking and wondering a good deal. I suppose the man who originally had it posted up must have had some idea of a 'carriage propelled by machinery.' Mark, it does not say steam. Possibly the tolls were made out by someone who may have seen or heard of the famous old 'Puffing Billy,' now at rest in South Kensington Museum; or is it probable that someone may have constructed some kind of locomotive machine though not propelled by steam? I have seen in some old books once in my possession illustrations representing curious 'road travelling machines,' how worked or supposed to be worked I know not, though presumably some letter-press descriptions were given in the works; at the time I did not pay much attention to them. I recollect well, however, in them there were various woodcuts of several different kinds of 'travelling carriages propelled by machinery,' with men drawn sitting on them, and apparently travelling at a high rate of speed, judging by the whirl of dust and the astonished look of the old-fashioned villagers as shown.

Shortly after leaving Hesket we passed to the right an old inn, which from its appearance we judged must in the old coaching days have been of some importance; it is now called, we observed, the Black Bull; probably it has never had any other title—rural England is very conservative. It looked very desolate, standing all alone without even a cottage near; desolate, indeed, but still too proud to mourn its lost greatness—buildings are as full of character as men. How it exists as an inn at all now is a

problem. Like many of these old-time hostelries by the wayside, its posting and coaching business gone for ever, it has a melancholy, deserted look. To see these cosy old-fashioned hostels of our forefathers, with their suggestions of past prosperity, comfort, and glory, going slowly to decay, is a most depressing sight.

There was a fine sweep of road up to the inn door, where erst many a coach pulled up and weary traveller, doubtless, alighted. This was now, alas! all grass-grown, the very home of weeds; the extensive stables were all forsaken and going fast to ruin, while the near sound of our wheels scared countless birds from their secure tenancy in the gloomy hay lofts above. The solemn caw, caw, caw of some rooks, who kept wheeling over some trees close to the old building, was in perfect harmony with the scene. Doubtless the ancestors of those very rooks had seen high times at the old hostel.

The road continued very hilly, though of great beauty; we passed by several quaint old farmhouses literally smothered in trees, looking very restful and peaceful, the very poetry of civilization.

Penrith we found to be a quiet, old-fashioned town; being built of red sandstone, the houses, though plain, have a cheerful look. Two hotels, the George and the Crown, both looked so comfortable and inviting, we settled the difficulty of selecting between them by driving up to the first and nearest, and found it to be all that a weary traveller could desire, which is saying a good deal.

CHAPTER XVII.

Penrith Church—The Giant's Grave—A Curious Method of Painting—The Beacon Hill—Brougham Castle—Anecdote of James I.—The Countess's Pillar—A Peculiar Tree—Old English Villages—A Strange Story—Ancient Manor House—A Ready-made Picture—Appleby Town, Castle, and Church—Cloisters turned into Shops—A Dainty Meal for the Restorer—A Puzzling Epitaph—Centenarians — Relics of Bull-baiting—A Stony Road — Savage Scenery—An Ancient Town—Brough Castle—A Tradition of Past Times—A Curious Dispute—Antiquarians at Fault—'The Wildest bit of Road in England'—An Antique Chamber.

In the morning, before starting on our day's pilgrimage, we took a stroll round the town. The shops, after our long country wanderings and absence from such allurements, appeared quite attractive. In the market-place, where of old stood the usual cross, now stands a more useful, if not equally picturesque, clock-tower. From here we found ourselves wandering towards the church. This is certainly a very plain structure, not to say a downright ugly one; it was erected, or what is about the same thing, nearly entirely rebuilt ('restored,' the guide-books say) in the year of grace—I cannot add 'taste'—1722, and that is sufficient to account for its uncompromising plainness.

The churchyard, however, makes up for whatever of interest may be lacking in the church itself. It contains a singular antique monument, called the

Giant's Grave; this consists of two stone pillars some fifteen feet in height and the same distance from each other; the space between these is enclosed on both sides by four large slabs inserted edgeways, and resembling in shape four gigantic shells. The pillars are inscribed with Runic or other unintelligible figures. Tradition, which in this case is probably correct, declares these stones were raised to the memory of Owen Cæsarius, who was one time King of Cumberland. Near to these pillars stands an upright stone called the Giant's Thumb, and if this relic is at all typical of the thumbs of past times we may indeed conclude 'there were giants in those days.'

There are, too, the ruins of an old castle here, which has had a stormy and an eventful history. It is built of the soft red sandstone of the neighbourhood, which weathers rapidly, and has suffered possibly as much from the action of time as from the destroying hand of man. The walls of this old castle possess, owing to the nature of the stone and the exposure to all weathers, a peculiar reddish grey colour not easy to describe. On our return home, whilst looking through a private gallery of pictures, I noticed a clever painting of this very castle, and my attention was arrested by the truthful colour the artist had given to the walls, so much so that I mentioned the fact to the owner, who informed me the artist (not unknown to fame) had told him that during his work he ran short of a certain colour or colours, and not being able to procure what he required in the town, the happy idea struck him of

scraping carefully off some portion of the crumbling stone, and of grinding and mixing it up with his medium, which he did, and thus successfully completed his picture, actually painting the walls with their own substance.

We had been of late fortunate in our weather, and again we awoke to a lovely morning. Out of Penrith we took the road leading to Brough, our expected destination for the evening, and after ascending a short hill turned round and took a farewell look at the place. The view of the quaint old town and ruined castle was charming, backed up as it was with a distance of sunlit mountains; to the north was the Beacon hill, on which fires were lighted to give notice of any invasion by the Scots in the olden days when the border feuds ran high.

Our journey that day proved to be one of never-ending interest, and rich in the memorials of bygone times. Quite suddenly and unexpectedly we came upon the historic ruins of Brougham Castle; perhaps it was because of the very suddenness and unexpectedness, or perhaps it was because of its own inherent charms—be that as it may—we thought, as the stern old pile came into view at an abrupt turn in the road, we had never seen anything more romantically beautiful. True, everything was in its favour: the ever-varying light and shade caused the ruin at one moment to stand out in high relief against a dark background of thick wood, then the next to be in gloomy shade and all around rejoicing in bright sunshine. To make the scene perfect



BROUGHAM CASTLE.

some cattle were standing lazily in the river close by, quite *à la* Cooper, and our ears were delighted with the musical splashing of the waters tumbling over a weir just beyond them.

We dismounted and rambled leisurely over the ruins of what was once a formidable stronghold; its hoary, old, worn and time-rent walls, grey with the weathering of ages, look little warlike now. Its halls, all roofless, silent, and deserted, echoed strangely to our footsteps; there was an air of desolation over the place, an oppressive gloom, giving to one the feeling that perchance even the spirits of those stern-faced warriors of old still hovered about and haunted the crumbling walls. From time to time this castle suffered much at the hands of the Scots, but was again and again repaired, and was in fair order in 1617, when James I. was entertained here by the Earl of Cumberland. An inscription upon it states that it was repaired by the Countess Dowager of Pembroke (that great restorer of castles) 'after it had lain ruinous for years.' Since then it appears to have gradually fallen into decay, until it has become what it now is, a grand relic of the feudal days.

> Memorial of the olden time,
> Telling of the feudal prime,
> More than memory can give
> With thy ancient ruins live.

The king was entertained here right royally, and many gallant noblemen were gathered to meet him; amongst others was a certain member of the Lumley family from Lumley Castle, near Durham. This

individual was boasting to His Majesty of the great antiquity of the Lumleys, who were very proud of their long descent. When in the middle of a long genealogical account, the King, whose patience was completely exhausted, exclaimed 'Deed, mon, pray thee gang no farther; let me digest the knowledge I ha' already gained, for by my saul I did no ken Adam's name was Lumley.'

Some two miles further on our way, in a lonely spot, we pulled up to inspect a curious and beautifully designed monument erected by the road-side; it was enclosed within railings, and near by was a large stone slab, the surface of which was much worn. The structure was in the form of a pillar and of graceful proportions; at the top of this was a square heading, the one side of which nearest the road had either a brass or a copper plate let in with a coat of arms emblazoned upon it, coloured and gilt proper, and bearing date 1654; beneath the coat of arms was a death's head; on either side of this was a sun-dial, in perfect order, and on the fourth side an inscription, which I copied, as follows:—

> This Pillar was erected Anno 1656 by ye R^{t} Hono^{ble}
> Anne Countess Dowager of Pembrook &c. Daughter and sole
> heire of Ye R^{t} Hono^{ble} George, Earl of Cumberland
> and for a memorial of her last parting in this place
> with her good and pious mother Ye R^{t} Hono^{ble}
> Margaret Countess Dowa^{ger} of Cumberland ye 2nd of
> April 1616. In memory whereof she also left an
> annuity of four Pounds to be distributed to ye poor
> within this parrish of Brougham: Every 2nd day of
> April, for ever upon ye stone table here hard by.
> Laus Deo.

This most interesting memorial we afterwards

learnt was called the 'Countess's Pillar;' it is in perfect condition, and though it has been exposed to the storms of over two centuries, save that it is time-toned and weather-stained, it appears as perfect as when first erected. The difference in date on each side of the pillar deserves attention.

Near this spot once stood a famous oak, renowned throughout the country far and wide; this went by the name of the 'Hart's Horn Tree,' and the tradition connected with it is as follows:—In the year 1334 the King of Scotland was on a visit to the Earl of Cumberland at his castle of Brougham (the one we had just seen). Hunting was his chief amusement, and one day the royal party chased a stag from Brougham to close against the Scotch border and back to this spot. The stag, exhausted, dropped dead at the foot of an oak, and the greyhound, in pursuit spent, died at the same place and time. In commemoration of this event the stag's horns were nailed to the tree. A singular freak of Nature took place: the bark grew over and completely covered the horns, and thus the oak became famous, and was visited by many from all parts. For over three centuries this curiosity existed, till at last the tree decayed and the branches were either lost or stolen.

From here to Appleby the road was one of enchanting beauty. Truly has this valley been called the Vale of Eden; it is well named, in spite of what old Fuller says to the contrary, in his quaint manner, 'That though Westmoreland has much of Eden, yet hath little delight therein.' Appearances may

certainly be deceptive, but a more peaceful, contented, or happier looking country could not, we thought, be found within the four seas.

We passed through Temple Sowerby, quite an idyllic hamlet with its picturesque cottages and quaint old-fashioned gardens, its ancient ivy-covered church, its charming green surrounded by grand old trees, the very poet's ideal of an English village. Connected with the churchyard here rather a good story is told of the olden times. It appears the gravedigger whilst at work one warm day fell asleep in the trench he was digging. The guard of the mail-coach passing chanced to notice the slumberer, and playfully gave a loud blast on his horn to awaken him. Whatever the gravedigger's dreams were about is not told, but it is related on being aroused by the horn, he awoke startled, deeming it was the last trump, and looking round and observing no one else but himself emerging from the graves around said: 'Good Lord! what a poor show for Temple Sowerby!'

The next village, Kirkbythore, was equally as picturesque. A short distance from this we passed an antique mansion, half smothered in trees, and which appeared to have seen better days; it had evidently been an old manor-house, a many-gabled mullioned-window edifice suggestive of bygone times and the fine old English gentleman; a russet, time-stained building, that carried one generations back, a building eloquent of ample hospitality and old romance.

Shortly before Appleby, a glorious bit of landscape arrested our attention. A valley of sunlit

woods opened up before us, through which glided a rippling, winding river, threading its way along like a silver streak, here gleaming and glancing in the light, there half lost in the shade of overhanging trees. A valley of gold and silver and green all bathed in a mellow radiance by the midday sun, the distance fading away into a soft blue haze; while near at hand, just where an artist would have placed them, some rustic stepping stones joined sloping bank to bank. It was like a bit cut out of a picture. We stopped long to admire the scene, and to listen to the restful sound of the running water, gurgling and splashing and chatting in that indescribable manner, making wild music, as only a rocky river can. Nor was the subdued rustling of the wind, shaking leaves of the trees around, lost upon us, as they were gently stirred by the summer breeze.

At Appleby we were again fortunate in our hotel, and here fared sumptuously. We found, too, a most charming and kind-hearted landlady at this place, one most anxious to please and evidently thoughtful for the smallest comforts of her guests. Surely so far our lines had fallen in pleasant places? So comfortable indeed were we made there that we had half a mind to forego an afternoon's stage and remain the night in such pleasant quarters.

Appleby is a very interesting old town, built on the side of a hill, and consists principally of one wide street. At the top of this there is a beautiful old stone pillar (possibly the remains of an ancient market cross); this has a square heading, on three sides of which are three sun-dials, and on the other is en-

graved a coat of arms. Sun-dials seem very plentiful in this part of the world; this made the third we had seen that day. At the foot of the structure is the following motto, evidently of ancient origin :—

Retain your Loyalty,
Preserve your rights.

This had probably been caused to be engraved thus by Anne, Countess of Pembroke, who had erected the wayside memorial we had already seen, as she was a little queen in these parts, caring for neither king nor protector, if by either she felt herself aggrieved, and the wording is very characteristic of her. Of this noble lady it is recorded that a ministerial request was sent to her, desiring her to have returned for the borough a certain person in high favour with the then Government. Her spirited reply was: 'I have been bullied by an usurper, I have been neglected by a court, I will not be dictated to by a subject—your man shall not stand.'

Close to the dial pillar is the entrance to Appleby Castle, which is surrounded by a small but beautiful park, and as our landlady told us the place was well worth seeing, we opened the gates and walked in. The building itself is a happy combination of the old and the modern; in one part is a grand old Norman keep, its stern old walls made beautiful by ivy, ruin-loving plant—what would a ruin be without ivy? After inspecting the castle, we went in search of the clerk, as we had been told the church was well worth seeing. There was some difficulty at first in discovering him, as it appeared he did duty also as

postman, but we managed after a time to secure him.

On one side of the church, facing the town, are some curious old cloisters; these, to our indignant surprise, we found had actually been converted into shops. Here of old the solemn, sandalled, cowled monks paced in holy meditation, or at least were supposed to do so. But times have changed since their days. Between the churchyard and the rectory is a picturesque gateway, evidently formed out of the mullions and transomes of a Gothic window, part of the spoils we presumed of the original church when it was upon one occasion restored—save the mark! for we gathered from the clerk that one of the results of that restoration was that the fine old stone traceries of the early windows were cut away, and their places supplied by the ordinary sash abominations! Poor old building, what an indignity! However, the church has again been re-restored, and fortunately this time more in keeping with the original edifice.

Inside this much-restored structure we observed a fine old organ, removed at one time from Carlisle Cathedral; also we noticed, attached to the corporation pew, a capital specimen of artistically wrought iron work, designed to hold the sword and mace. Then we were attracted by a monument of both considerable beauty and interest, erected to the memory of the Countess Dowager of Cumberland; it was of marble and alabaster, richly carved and gilt; on the head of the recumbent figure was a golden crown, and at its foot a lamb, and beneath

the following inscription, which we faithfully copied :—

> Who Fayth, Love, Mercy, Noble, Constancie,
> To God, to Virtue, to distress, to right
> Observ'd, exprest shew'd held religiously,
> Hath here this monument thou seest in sight,
> The cover of her earthly part but passenger
> Know heaven and fame contains the best of her.

This quaintly worded inscription the clerk assured us was capable of being read in two different ways. Some antiquarians he had shown it to had discovered this fact, but 'he was not sufficient of a scholard to tell how it was.' So we set to and puzzled our brains for some time to solve the mystery of the second reading, but ignominiously failed.

On one of the walls of the church, in a conspicuous place, a painted notice informed us that 'Anne, Countess of Pembroke. In Anno 1655, Repaired all this building.' We wondered if the word 'repaired' was synonymous with 'restored' according to the modern meaning of that word. Repair struck us as a safer term to use than restore. This same Countess, who appeared to be very fond of bricks, or rather stones and mortar, by a will left eleven shillings a week to be given to thirteen old women of the parish by the vicar, who had also every morning to read prayers to them himself, a proxy not being allowed, so it appeared to us the poor vicar could never get very far away from home during his 'vicarage.'

In the vestry we were shown some old pewter tankards that in the Puritan days were used for the communion, the Puritans having melted down

the old silver vessels, and converted them into practical coin. Here also we saw a Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs,' black lettered, and which our guide informed us used to be chained to a desk, together with a fine old Bible, also black lettered. In the churchyard was a tombstone to one John Hall, of Hoff, aged 109 years, and who died in 1716, and to his son, aged 86 years, and to his grandson, John Hall, aged 101 years, and who died in 1821; there were also several other gravestones placed over those who had lived for over a century. Appleby must be the place to reside in for those who want to spin out their existence; in fact, as the clerk said, 'A doctor could not very well either live or die there, it was so dreadfully healthy;' 'and dull,' we added, which addition to his sentence our informant did not deny.

In the market place we saw the old ring still existing, and firmly secured to the ground, which was used in days of old for the purpose of bull-baiting, when that form of amusement was considered a noble pastime, and the spot where the grand stand was erected facing the market cross is still plainly visible. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would have had its work cut out had it existed then.

From Appleby we proceeded on our way to the little lonely town of Brough. The road turned out to be a hilly one, and rough as well, so rough indeed in places, that we were actually compelled to drive upon the grass borders of it, which, though heavy and by no means smooth travelling, was infinitely preferable to the terrible jolting of the road, or rather

what is called by courtesy a road. In some places we noticed large boulders placed on either side of the way, evidently put there to show the direction of the road to the old coaches in winter when the ground was covered with snow.

It was a bleak part of the world; every mile we traversed the country increased in grandeur and wildness. To the left of us abruptly rose forbidding looking crags, some 500 feet or more in height; these frowned down upon us, and, joined with the waste moorlands beyond, gave an inhospitable appearance to the scene, and gave us also a sort of a feeling that Nature had forgotten to finish her work in this out-of-the-way corner. The stern cliffs, though so drear and bare, were lighted up by the slanting rays of the sun in warm orange tints, their crevices showing dark cool indigo shadows, but no light, however bright or warm, could ever make those bleak crags look soft or lovely. Grandeur, not beauty, was theirs. Riven and scarred and carved into strange fantastic shapes by the weathering and storms of ages, fancy could form out of their weird outlines almost anything she chose. It was as though we were travelling through a primeval world, not yet prepared for living inhabitants.

Soon we came in sight of Brough, which from the distance looked a charmingly romantic little town, with its hoary old castle, and setting of purple-grey moorlands beyond. But alas! in this case certainly it was 'distance that lent enchantment to the view,' for on a nearer approach the place lost all its charms that a few miles off it appeared to possess,

and upon arriving in its one solitary world-forsaken street we thought it was altogether one of the most wo-begone spots it had ever been our fortune or misfortune to come across. Had it not been for the lateness of the hour and the long stage to the next village, Brough, or Brough-under-Stainmore, to give it its proper name, would not have detained us. As it was, we had to make the best of things as they were, for it was impossible to proceed, so we drove up to the one cheerless looking inn of the place. This appeared quite in keeping with its surroundings; however, we noticed there were some passable stables attached to it, so in one respect our minds were at ease. But the rough exterior of the Castle Inn proved somewhat misleading; perhaps it was because we expected so little, made us so contented with the cheer within; anyhow, we fared far better than we, at one time, anticipated we should, and after a hearty Yorkshire tea, in the most old-fashioned of old-fashioned rooms, we felt in a better mood with the place, and as there was yet some daylight left, we took a stroll down to the castle. Little of this is now left but the massive keep, which itself is but a mere shell, roofless and moss-grown, the home of the owl and the bat; docks, rank grass, nettles and briars flourish around its base.

There was no guide to the castle, and we rejoiced in the fact. There was one thing that had pleased us very much in our journey so far—we had been able to climb and wander over all the old castles without being troubled with, or hurried about in

feverish haste by, useless guides. It is pleasant to be able to take one's own time when exploring a ruin or any place of interest, scenic or otherwise, to select one's own standpoints for viewing, and generally to observe and reason about matters for oneself, to have something left for the imagination. A world of facts without romance would, after all, be but a poor world to live in. Truly you may get plenty of romance of a kind from a guide, but the quality is, as a rule, dreadfully poor—evidently home-made, and, like home-made wines, not much to be desired.

But, after this digression, to return to the castle. This old ruin has suffered a last indignity in having become a quarry of ready-hewn stones for those who had any building to do in these parts. It is fortunate, in one respect, that Brough is not an enterprising place, or by this time there would have been nothing left of this once feudal stronghold. A large stone, long since removed by some Vandal hand and applied to ordinary building purposes, tells how—'This castle of Brough-under-Stanemore, and the great tower of it, was repaired by Lady Ann Clifford, in the year of our Lord God, 1659, so as she came to live in it herself for a little while in September, 1661, after it had been ruinous, without timber or any covering ever since the year 1521.'

It appears that Brough was formerly a Roman station of some importance, and many relics of the Roman occupation have, from time to time, been discovered here; in fact, the castle stands on the spot where the Romans had their encampment or fortress,

relating to which period the following tradition has been handed down. During the reign of the Emperor Vespasian, one Marcus Festus commanded the Roman entrenchments here. He had a daughter, an only child, named Festa. It seems that a youth named Cathlon, son of a British chief who had fallen before the invader's arms, fell in love with her. This youth Festus had treated with especial regard; he had him instructed in all the learning imparted to Roman youths, and even gave his consent to the marriage. Cathlon, however, one day brooding over his father's death, in a moment of impetuosity, and forgetting all the kindness of Festus, poisoned the reservoir of water that supplied the camp. His treachery was discovered, and he perished by the lictor's axe. Heartbroken, the deceived Festa died, and Festus, returning to Rome, presented himself before the Emperor and said, 'I come from among a people who will never forget that they have been free, and I bring thence nothing save this small urn, containing the ashes of a beloved daughter.'

Amongst the many relics of those times, one has recently come to light, a plain hewn stone, with curious lettering thereupon, and this lettering has given rise to a very pretty and curious dispute between certain antiquarians and learned doctors; in fact, the doctors could not agree amongst themselves. It appears that the inscription upon the stone was actually 'read as a Runic epigraph by Dr. George Stephens, the famous Scandinavian scholar. But apparently his success was like that of the sinologist who read the scratches on the whorls found at

Hissarlik as Chinese!' Two other eminent scholars, Dr. Isaac Taylor and Professor Sayce, eventually, by the aid of Greek, managed to make out that the inscription recorded the death of a boy aged sixteen, called 'Hermes.'

This matter of deciphering a strange inscription reminds one of another and somewhat similar occurrence which happened some years ago. It chanced that a select body of antiquarians and scientific men were driving through a certain portion of Cornwall in order to inspect some old stone monuments, and, if possible, to solve the mystery of their origin. On their way they passed by a field, in the centre of which stood a monolith. They all descended to view this, and found it to be covered with strange marks. One of their number stated that these marks were Runic, and thereupon commenced a learned discussion upon them. Whilst so engaged, an old shepherd chanced to pass that way. One of the party called to him, and inquired if he could tell them what the name of the stone was, or give them any information or local tradition respecting it. ''Ees,' to the inquiry, replied the shepherd, 'I knows the stane weel, we calls it by no name whatsomeever; my old fayther, who were a mason, when a young man put her up there and roughed her over wi' a chisel for the cattle to scratch themselves agin; ye see there b'aint no trees about here for them.' As to how the learned doctor felt, or what he said on hearing this, history is silent.

On returning to the hotel, I sought out the ostler—that individual being generally fairly well

informed about the roads and accommodation to be had on the way—as I rather feared from the look of moorland heights ahead our next day's stage would prove a hilly, if not a rough one. In reply to my queries, he said I should find the road over the moors 'fearfully wild and bleak, eight miles or so uphill to begin with, and in a dreadful condition; in fact it is,' he continued, 'the wildest bit of road in England.' This, truly, was agreeable news; I had hardly expected a favourable report, but was not prepared for such a wholesale condemnation. The weather, too, did not look well for the morrow; the sun had gone down in a pale yellow, behind dark grey rain-charged clouds, whose long tails, projecting forth, promised wind as well as wet. However, I comforted myself with the thought that, after all, the road might not turn out so bad as was represented. All the same, it was evident we were in for a bleak and exposed drive, and we should have been better pleased with more favourable weather prospects, as we were not ambitious of being weather-bound in this cold, bleak, uninteresting little town.

Gas was a luxury, of course, unknown here, so we had candles that made the darkness of our gloomy room only the more visible. We were rather amused, too, when the servant brought them in, by her asking when we went to bed, 'We always go,' she said, 'at ten o'clock; but,' she kindly added, 'you can sit up a little later if you wish.'

A quaint, old-fashioned bed-room we had, with a huge four-poster with much-faded hangings and

other appointments in keeping. There was no mistake about it, the furniture was old—genuinely old—possibly it was in existence when America was an unknown world, and if so, I can only say its looks did not belie its age.

On awaking next morning amid such surroundings, we almost felt as if, during our sleep, we had reversed the usual mode of the progress of time, and that we had slept backwards for two centuries or more, that railways, steam, electricity, telegraphs, &c., were an illusion and a dream. Nor on rising and looking out of our casement windows did we see any sight or hear any sound that proved we were in the nineteenth and not the sixteenth century, so old-world and antique-looking did the place appear. It seemed as though for ages past no addition or alteration had been made to the collection of hard-featured, plain structures that compose this dreary little Westmoreland town.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Wet Morning—Doubtful Prospects—A Tour of Inspection—Ancient Crosses—Over Stainmoor—A Bleak Drive—The Rere Cross—A Moorland Prospect—A Lonely Hostelrie—Traditions of the Spital Inn—An Oasis in the Desert—Bowes—Dotheboys Hall—True Love—An Old Castle—Inn Full—Barnard Castle—No Accommodation—We Secure Quarters at Last—A Kind-hearted Landlady—The Abbey Bridge—The Tees—A Mile of Beauty—Athelstane Abbey—Rokeby—One of Nature's Masterpieces—Greta Bridge—Fox Hall—A Mysterious Sign-post—Milestones—Highest Portion of the old Northern Mail Road—A Coaching Clapham Junction—An Old Manor House—Catterick Bridge Hotel—A Cool Reception—Tales of My Landlord.

PATTER, patter, patter, all night long, and patter, patter, patter all throughout the early morning beat the incessant rain against our window panes. We rose only to look out upon a regular wet day: a grey world was before us, a heavy leaden sky above, and a steady downpour was in progress, one that looked as if it meant business.

Here was a pretty state of affairs! To be shut up all day in this ancient inn, in this world-forsaken, out-of-the-way place, with nothing to do but watch the rain, was not a fate to be desired, and yet to cross the bleak, barren, storm-swept moors, with a bad road into the bargain, was not a particularly inviting alternative; and the worst of it was, there was a doubt about the accommodation on the road, and of course the horses as well as ourselves had to be

considered. A look at the barometer did not brighten the outlook, for that instrument showed a decided and a most provoking tendency downwards.

Some sportsmen who were staying at the hotel for the shooting on the moors, and likewise weather-bound, looked gloomy enough, and when we consulted them, gave us but scant comfort; they stated it was their opinion that we were in for not merely a few hours' soaking, but for a day or two of it, for as one of them cheeringly remarked, 'Brough is about the worst place for rain in all Yorkshire, and hard to beat for wet anywhere in England; and when once it begins to come down there is no knowing when it will leave off—one fine day a week is a very fair average here.'

The wind was blowing a regular hurricane overhead, the rain-laden clouds tore along at a wild pace, the windows of our hotel rattled and clattered in their antique casements, we almost expected each blast would blow them in. Pleasant weather certainly! The aforesaid sportsmen were particularly earnest in their expressions of opinion as to the inadvisability of our attempting to cross over the wild lonely moors in such terrible weather, and related, for our especial edification, wonderful anecdotes of lost travellers, and of mail-coaches being overturned by such storms in former times, when the road was in fair order, and not in the uncared-for state it now is, and when, if anything happened or a breakdown occurred, there was regular hotel accommodation to be had. Perchance the sportsmen, with no sport, no papers, and nothing to do, were somewhat dull,

and would not have been altogether sorry had they been able to persuade us to have delayed our journey a day, and have kept them company.

However, as it was only early morning, and things generally look brighter after a good meal, we ordered breakfast and waited the course of events. That repast over, we took a turn out, clad in our waterproofs, to try for ourselves the quality of the weather. We were nearly blown off our feet for our trouble, and we found it really hard work to make any headway against the tempest of wind and rain; still we would not give in, and struggled against the elements as best we could.

There was little of interest to be discovered in the queer old-fashioned place. We had the one little street all to ourselves, the only living objects visible save an old duck, who appeared to be enjoying itself immensely in a dirty puddle under the lee of a huge piece of rock. We came across two old market crosses, one at either end of the street, of the usual pattern, with steps up to the pillar. They were much weather-stained and worn, and a good deal the worse for their long exposure to past storms. An inscription was barely legible on the upper one, which we copied as follows: 'B.M.C. 1331.' It might have been intended for 1531, but the first 3 appeared tolerably distinct, and I think we read it correctly; if so, we presumed this showed that the cross was over 500 years old, and though that is a great age, all I can say is, it looked it; and possibly, too, the dreary street appeared then much as it appears now.

By twelve o'clock it was blowing as hard as ever,

the rain clouds appeared to travel even faster than before, and another inspection of the barometer showed still another fall; and as we felt we might stay on for days, and then have to face similar weather, we wisely or unwisely determined to make all as secure and weather-proof as possible, and venture forth, even though we came to grief, and in spite—it might be because of—the adverse prophecies of both sportsmen and ostler, who seemed to think we were on the high way to becoming lunatics, to go. Still, I reasoned, with my knapsack I had alone crossed some of the wildest mountain passes in much such weather, and what I could face surely my horses could? Never shall I forget that day or the abominably bad road, though we fared not so badly after all.

'Fortune favours the brave.' All being made, to use a nautical expression, 'snug and taut,' we started; the rain, though it did not actually cease, came down with less vigour, and the wind for the time seemed to have exhausted itself. Once really 'under way' we felt quite in spirits again, and remembered no longer our misgivings. Collar work commenced at once on leaving Brough, and stiff work it was, too; but fortunately the surface of the road was moderately good, and we felt inclined to think its character had been greatly maligned. But, alas! a mile or so made a woful difference; deep ruts, any quantity of stones, a complete assortment of all sizes and shapes, from a moderate-sized boulder to a pebble, covered the path completely, save where, here and there, a moist treacherous-looking patch of

grass told of a dangerous soft bit. The mount was no easy task for the horses, and from time to time we had to stop for breath and rest them.

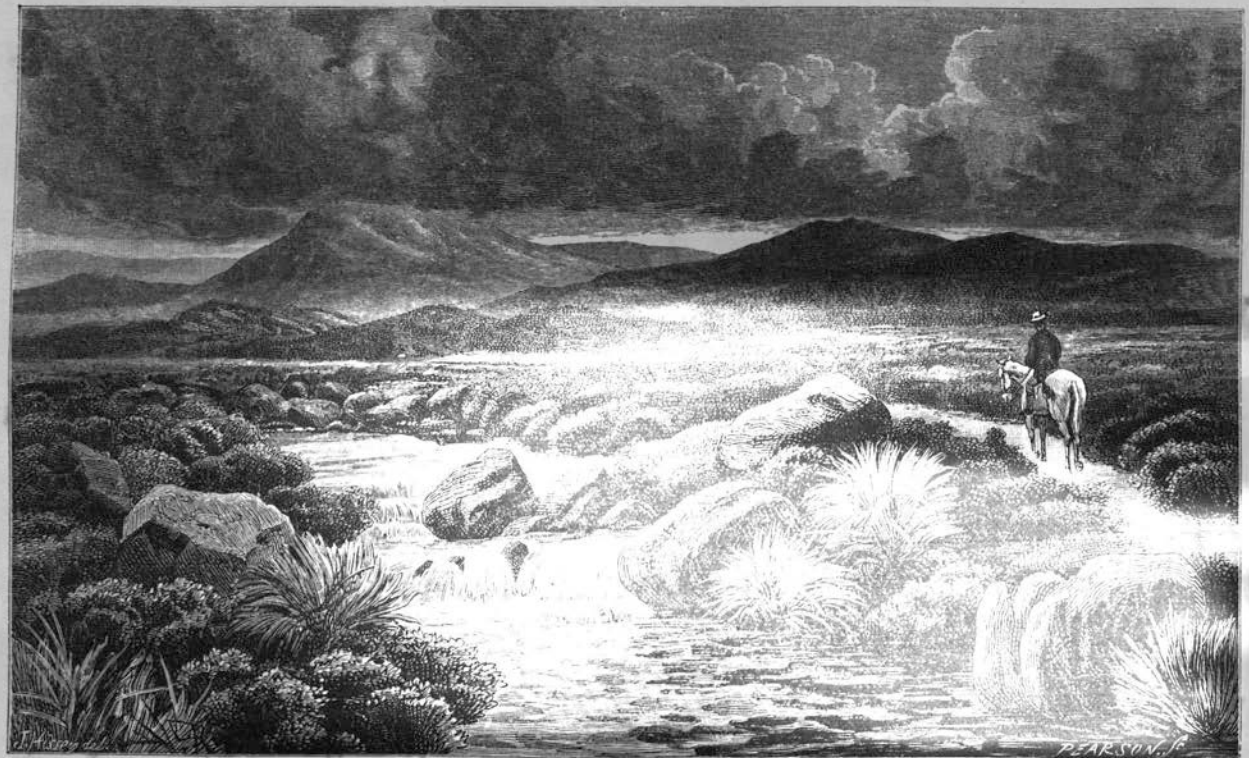
Fortunately, most fortunately, the rain had now entirely ceased, though the wind had not, and although the look-out was wild, weird, and dreary enough, it had a certain charm of its own to a vigorous mind. The dense masses of grey vapour had risen, and a strange yellow sheen gleamed above us, but we knew not how long it would be before the clouds would again descend and envelop us. The view, looking back from time to time, was simply magnificent; one might travel miles upon miles in many countries and not see anything finer; the wild defile and the general contour of the land looked more like a bit of wild Afghanistan than a portion of peaceful, mellow England; only the climate was wanting for the deception to be complete. There was a round tower on a crag overlooking the road, of primitive construction, and looking disconsolate and desolate enough. Far, far away on the horizon were the dark blue stormy hills of the Lake District, their summits shrouded in mists; from their bases to the foot of the hills at Brough, lying now far below, lay stretched out before us a wonderful expanse of comparatively flat country. Owing to the peculiar state of the atmosphere, the aërial effects were very fine. A sea of clouds above, a brooding cold grey world below, a world of sad browns and dull greens, a landscape all in tone.

Still the road continued to rise, and by this time we quite considered it had earned its evil reputation;

all signs of cultivation were now left behind, all about was a barren wilderness. Higher still and higher went that wonderful road, up amongst the hurrying clouds; the cold was intense, but the summit of the pass was reached at last, and, though equally rough, the way was now level.

Here, on the lone, wild, desolate heights of Stainmoor we came across a most interesting relic of the vanished past, in the shape of the remains of an old stone cross, known by the name of the Rere Cross. Little is left of this now but a much weather-worn stone. Who raised this structure upon this drear moorland, and for what purpose, must for ever be a mystery. Tradition says it was originally called the 'Roi-Cross'—*i.e.* the King's Cross—and that it was erected by William the Conqueror and Malcolm, King of Scotland, who met here prepared for battle, but who thought better of it, and in place of fighting concluded a treaty, and elevated on the ground the above cross, as a mark of the boundary of their kingdoms, causing to be carved on one side of the structure an image of the King of England, and on the other that of His Majesty of Scotland. An unlikely story, to say the least; but, as history is silent, tradition has it all her own way.

It is indeed a strange spot on which to raise a monument of any kind; no sign of human habitation was to be seen, nothing but the bleak far-spreading moorlands, bounded only by circling, mist-soaked hills of indigo-grey. As we saw the place the picture was not a lively one—a cold waste of sky overhead, a bare, brown, grey-green wilderness around, a



BOWES MOOR

vast sea of dark peaty soil, no life of any kind visible, not even that of a leaping fall or running water.

We proceeded onwards as fast as the state of the road would allow, keeping an anxious look-out for any signs of a solitary inn the ostler at Brough had informed us stood all alone by the roadside some few miles beyond the Rere Cross—a small hostelrie sometimes kept open for the benefit of sporting gentlemen. If it should happen to be closed! that was the disagreeable thought that would keep crossing our minds; and if it should be, would the horses be able to drag us on to Bowes? for to have endeavoured to have camped out on those chilly uplands would have been a worse punishment for our tired steeds than proceeding, tired not so much from the actual distance traversed as from the hilliness and badness of the way.

Just as we were reasoning to ourselves which would be the most probable event, a small house came into view, standing solitary and darkly out against the waste of grey sky at the edge of the moor; it looked as though it verily stood at the end of the world. We eagerly scanned it as we drew nearer and nearer, but we could not see any signs of life, and with doubting hearts we pulled up at the door. I descended and knocked, and in my haste to know the result turned the handle and opened the door, and a welcome and unexpected sight met my delighted gaze. A large old-fashioned Yorkshire kitchen, with a roaring fire in the ample grate, a woman bending over the same cooking something

evidently savoury by the odour, and, seated on an old brown oak settle, a hearty-looking man, presumably watching his dinner cooking. And oh! the contrast from the grey cold without to the ruddy glow within. The surprise of the inmates appeared equal to mine, and it was a minute or two before I could make them comprehend we were travellers requiring food and shelter, and not over particular as to the quality of either. But soon the landlord took it in—and us as well, and we were soon before that glorious fire with its welcome warmth. Shortly before our spirits were at zero, now they were correspondingly high. The horses had to do the best they could in a tumble-down old shed, but fortunately it was weather-tight, and whilst I helped my man to unharness them, the landlord, worthy man, somewhere found some oats; hay or chaff had we none, but the corn was fair, and the rest and shelter everything.

On returning to the kitchen, what was my surprise at the landlady ushering me into quite a neat little parlour, where she had already lighted a fire, and seated before which was my wife. In the room was also a luxurious sofa, easy chairs, fair paintings on the walls, and littered around on some tables were back numbers of the 'Field,' 'Times,' 'Illustrated London News,' &c. This was surely magic; had I seen a locomotive engine suddenly begin to fly, I could hardly have been more astonished. But the mystery was soon explained. The rooms had been built and furnished by some sporting gentlemen (long life to them!) who kept up this place for their own convenience, when shooting on

the moors. I am sure we felt duly grateful to the sporting fraternity.

Strange stories are told of this desolate inn of Spital, as it was called in the old coaching times. In those days it was frequently attacked by robbers; such a lonely hostelrie, so far removed from all human habitations, affording them a tempting and safe quarry. Upon one occasion, after a band of thieves had been driven off, it is recorded a ghastly relic was discovered in the shape of 'a hand of glory;' this consisted of a dead man's hand with a candle placed in it. According to a superstition then prevalent, this was believed to show only a light to those who held it, and to be invisible to all others.

At one time a certain landlord seems to have been in league with the knights of the road, and, in return for his services to them, to have shared their spoil. And it is recorded that one of these gentlemen was exceedingly wroth with the said landlord, and rated him loudly as being a dishonourable man, for that whilst he was 'under articles to him,' he gave information to a rival on the road. These questionable gentlemen, it would appear, were scrupulous about their 'word of honour.'

Our dinner was ham and eggs and bottled ale—a queer mixture you will say, good reader, but may you never enjoy a meal less than we did that! Some hot Yorkshire cakes finished our repast. Very cosy, very cheerful did that little room look, and sorry we were to leave this oasis in the desert; but the day was growing old, we could not remain

longer, and we knew not for certain where our resting-place for the night would be, so we once more prepared to face the road and the weather.

The wind now had dropped, and the rain commenced again in right-down earnest, and it can rain on the moors at times; the road, if possible, increased in badness, and going downhill the danger of a stumble was considerably increased; however, we safely descended from the moors and entered the quaint and interesting, if somewhat bleak, little town of Bowes, and upon our arrival there the rain stopped. Here we saw the original, or the supposed original, of Dotheboys Hall, which Charles Dickens so capitally described; the old house still stands, but the schoolroom and outbuildings have been pulled down; this ceased to exist as a school shortly after his book was published. It was interesting to see this place, as giving a reality to fiction, and pleasing to have such a telling example of how much good fiction can accomplish. Dickens was too many for Wackford Squeers.

We made a pilgrimage to the churchyard to see the grave where rest the two faithful lovers whose touching fate has been so pathetically described in Mallet's affecting ballad of 'Edwin and Emma.' Perhaps the following simple unadorned extract from the parish register will tell the sad tale better than any words of mine could do:—'Rodger Wrightson, jun., and Martha Railton, both of Bowes. Buried in one grave. He died in a fever, and upon tolling his passing bell she cried out, "My heart is broke," and in a few hours expired, purely through love.' We

next inspected the castle; the only part remaining of this old stronghold (important once in strength though unimportant in history) is a fine ruined keep with its four frowning walls.

Bowes is a sleepy little place. The Romans had a station here guarding the road to Brough over Stainmoor, and we had driven over the same track their chariots took!. Crossing those lone uplands we looked upon the same landscape they looked upon long ago; it has probably changed not at all. But, however important Bowes may have been in times past, it is a dull, dead-alive enough town now; one could not imagine that anybody ever hurried or bustled himself here.

The little inn here was quite full, and as they told us the one at our next stage, Greta Bridge, was full also with 'shooting men,' we held a consultation as to what course it would be best to pursue. Fortunately it was not actually raining, though the lowering water-charged clouds looked as though the downpour might soon commence. After an inspection of our maps we finally decided to drive to Barnard Castle, in Durham, some few miles out of our way, and being a fair-sized town, we deemed it best to proceed there, as we judged in such a place we should be able to procure plenty, and a choice of accommodation. We had a capital road now, and a smooth one withal; after our uneven experiences of late, it appeared as level as a board; but anything at all decent would have seemed to us excellent then.

The approach to Barnard Castle by the road we took is very romantic. The old ruined castle,

perched boldly on a rocky crag, faced us as we neared the town, and under the shadow of the dark frowning pile we crossed the Tees upon an old stone bridge. The river, which is here comparatively tranquil for a space, gives back the stern and rugged form of the hoary old stronghold; a fall or weir in the distance breaks the stillness with its musical though unvarying monotone. The quaint old town, too, is pleasing, half revealed through the foliage of many trees. As we drove up the High Street we heard the church bells ringing, and observed a balloon going up; moreover, we found the place was very crowded. This was a bad sign. Evidently there was some *fête* on; however, there was nothing for it, so we drove up to the hotel and asked for rooms. Once more our spirits went down to zero, if possible even lower, for the landlady, who came forward, said 'she was very sorry, but she was quite full—in fact the town was crowded; it was a flower show, and she had not a single room disengaged.' This was pleasant news! Both ourselves and our horses were sorely in need of rest and shelter, and, to add to our troubles, the rain came down once more in torrents. Just then, for one moment only, we voted driving tours to be failures. Fortunately the stables were not crowded; at any rate, we concluded we would get the horses put up, and then hold a consultation as to what was to be done.

So far our minds were at ease, the horses safe and comfortable for the night, and for the moment what was to become of ourselves did not much trouble

us. We then went in search of the landlady, to see if she could not get us a room out somewhere, she seemed such a pleasant, kind-hearted body. I knew if it were possible she would somehow manage to accommodate us; but if it is not possible, said my wife, what are we to do? A very pertinent question certainly, and one fortunately I had not to answer, for just then we came across the good dame we were in search of. I at once explained our plight. She told us not to trouble ourselves, a room we should have, and eventually a servant came and conducted us down the street to a private house, which turned out to be the landlady's own home, and in the drawing-room here we found a capital fire had been thoughtfully lighted, and the servants had been instructed to do all they could to make us comfortable.

When our bill was presented to us on leaving, we were surprised to find there was no charge whatever made for the extra accommodation that had been so considerately provided for us, and no doubt at some little, if not considerable, inconvenience. We protested against this to the landlady, but she would neither hear about it nor accept anything more than the actual sum down in the very moderate bill. Words were of no avail; she only said 'she had done as she would be done by,' and so we were obliged to leave at last gratefully in her debt. Mere money of course will not repay a kindness of this sort, but we had no other way of showing our gratitude. Good, kind-hearted, worthy landlady, I would there were more people like you in the world!

The morning did not break very promisingly.

Although the downpour had ceased, there was a regular Scotch mist on, accompanied by a disagreeable drizzle, and a very wetting one too. I consulted the ostler about the weather; that individual went out into the road, and, looking sagely about, after a few seconds' deliberation said, 'he shouldn't be surprised if it turned to wet.' Good gracious, I thought, I wonder what they do consider to be wet in this part of the world!

A look round the town, ulster-clad, in spite of the general dampness, disposed pleasantly of an hour or so. The castle ruins and grounds are the lions of the place. Nearly opposite our hotel was a quaint old market-hall, which we learnt, by an inscription upon it, was erected by one Thomas Blake, a native, in the year 1747.

Barnard Castle, the town I mean, is a very old place; some of the streets we noticed were grass-grown, and had a melancholy, depressing look; but its situation is exceedingly picturesque, being built on the steep side of a hill, the base of which is swept by the Tees, an impetuous-looking river, hurrying along as though eager to get away from the busy haunts of men. But the delightful old-world look of the place is quite spoilt by a gigantic edifice, a square, obtrusive, ostentatious, ugly pile, which we were told was a museum. Its assertiveness and size makes it quite an eyesore, and reminded us more than anything else of a gigantic American hotel.

In spite of the ostler's prophecy, by eleven o'clock the day gave signs of turning out fine, the sunshine filtered through the mist, the wetting drizzle ceased,

and we at once ordered the horses to be put to, and were soon again on our way, on past some fine old timbered houses, grey and brown with age, and looking as though they had seen better days, yet too proud to mourn their vanished glories.

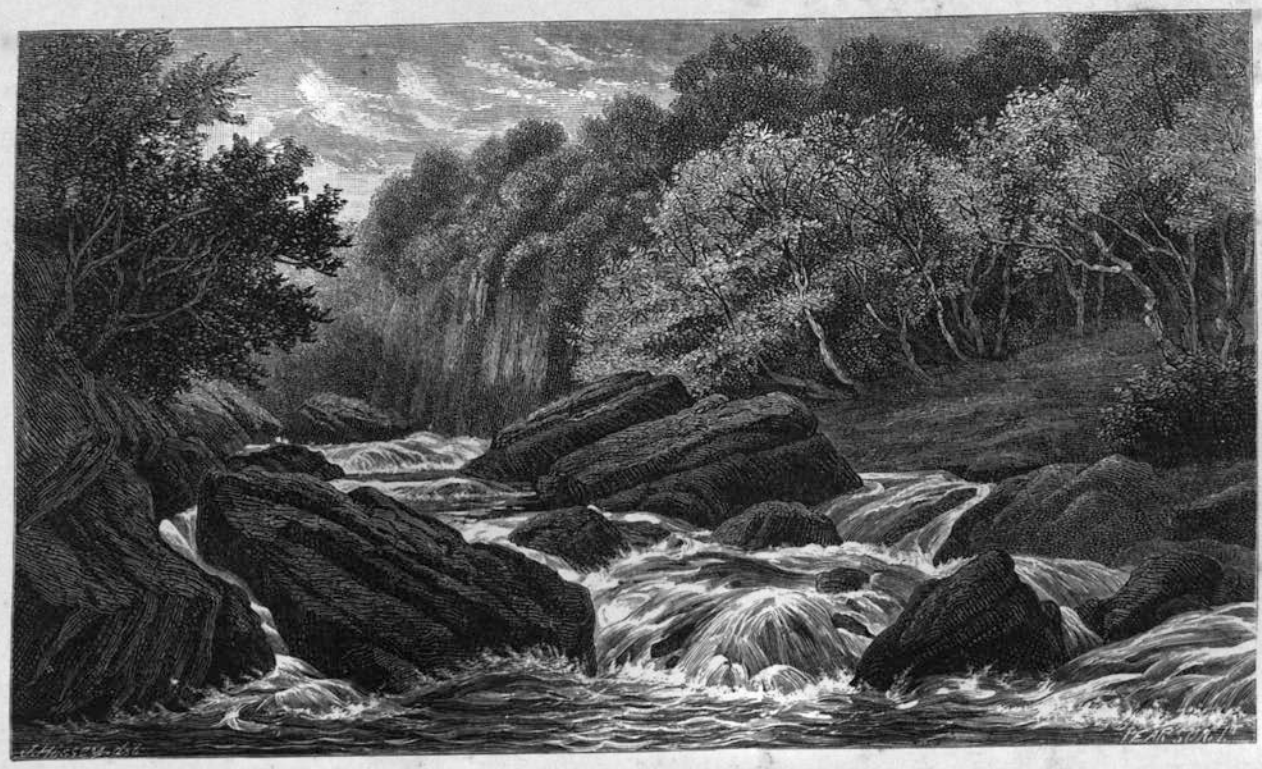
There is something very exhilarating and most enjoyable driving through the country after rain; the air then is so fresh and clear, washed from all impurities as it were, and laden with such sweet perfumes. The distant views, too, look so near, the colour everywhere is astonishingly bright and pure, and all is sharp and luminous; there is nearly always, during the clearing up of stormy weather, a plentiful supply of clouds about, and these cause a delicious play of light and shade; and last, but not least, there is no dust; mud there certainly is, and in some parts of the country, for instance the Derbyshire limestone roads, mud of a most tenacious character.

We soon now came to the wooded banks of the Tees, and our road descended and crossed the river by the Abbey bridge, a highly picturesque structure in a highly picturesque spot. And never shall I forget the unexpected beauty-peep we had from the bridge. The lovely views, both looking up and down from this spot, were simply enchanting; and the great pleasure of it was that all this wealth of loveliness was totally unexpected. A mile of open sunshine was before us, a vista of waving many-coloured woods, of bright, chattering, laughing waters—yes, laughing is the only word that will at all describe the sounds of the tumbling, gambolling, and splashing of the

Tees. What a soothing melody there is in the music made by the flow of a shallow river over its rocky bed! I could listen for hours to the liquid notes of the sweet wordless songs of such a stream and weary not.

The rocks through which the Tees has found or channelled its way are of a hard marble nature, and the falling waters, as they dash and splash against these, ring and chime, echo and re-echo in a strangely delightful manner. Long we halted on that magic bridge, drinking in the wonders of the scene, a scene hardly to be described by brush or pen, or even both combined; and to crown this picture we saw the gables and east window (or rather the remains of one) of a grey old abbey peeping out of a mass of greenery, almost drowned in a wealth of verdure.

The abbey came upon us quite by surprise, a most agreeable surprise, and appeared all the more romantic in consequence. The ruins are not very extensive, though of great interest and delightfully situated upon a rising wooded knoll. On the sward within the chancel two or three stone slabs still remain, moss grown and green, with sculptures half erased; one of these is to the memory of a certain abbot, the other to a Rokeby, the lettering of which is still legible. Little is left now of the once stately pile; time and man, the latter being the greater culprit, have done their work only too well. Here, at Athelstane Abbey, were the tombs of the once famous families of Bowes, Fitz-Hugh, and Rokeby, all, alas! overthrown when the building was laid waste upon the dissolution of the religious houses.



ON THE GRETA.

About another mile—a mile of scenic loveliness—brought us to the classic ground of Rokeby. The manor of Rokeby was in the possession of the Rokebys (who lie buried in the abbey we had just seen) from the Conquest till the time of Charles I. They were a warlike family, and had distinguished themselves on many a hard-fought field. Lord Rokeby, the last of the race, embraced the cause of the unfortunate king, and his estates were in consequence confiscated.

The grounds are of great beauty, being undulating and well timbered. Here the Greta joins the Tees, both rivers flowing through a most romantic glen. The meeting of the waters is a scene to be remembered, and one that has been lovingly portrayed by both poet and painter. Scott and Turner have made the spot classic for all time to come; suffice then will it be for me to say that it is as beautiful as rock, river, over-arching foliage, and tumbling, foaming water can make it. It is one of Nature's masterpieces, a very fairies' glen. Not only is the eye pleased, but the ear is so as well; the gurgling and splashing of the waters form sweet rhythmical sounds, that come wafted on the stilly air in a half-mournful cadence, the untranslatable language of a happy river.

We now passed Greta Bridge, with its two cosy-looking, old-fashioned inns, charmingly ensconced in tall overhanging trees—trees that, like the buildings they shelter, must have seen many changes and strange sights on this road. Judging by the size of these rural hostelries and the extensive stabling

attached to them, this must have been an important stage in the days of the old coaches. It is strange how, being on the road so much and away from railways, one somehow by degrees comes to regard them as an unreality, a kind of hallucination of the brain; and I verily believe, had we met on our way the North mail of the olden type bowling along, with its fast-travelling team and scarlet-coated, gold-laced guard with sounding horn, we should not have felt much astonished.

The ostler at Barnard Castle had told us on starting that we should find capital roads to-day, with ample hotel accommodation; so we trotted merrily along, with no anxiety about quarters, but with just a slight regret that one of the two picturesque looking inns at Greta were not to be our halting place.

Some nine miles or more brought us to Fox Hall, a small wayside hostel. Why it bears such a grand name I cannot tell; excepting its title there is nothing at all grand about the place, indeed very much the reverse. We observed there were stables attached to the building, so we pulled up here. The landlady, who came to the door, seemed surprised to see us, so we concluded that visitors were strange articles in this part of the world. Her husband and son soon appeared upon the scene, and it was not long before the horses were comfortably stabled. Stables the landlord had, but neither hay nor corn, nor any straw for that matter. But we were equal to the emergency. 'Was there any farmer in the neighbourhood?' we inquired. 'Oh yes; there

was one lived close by.' And so two and two were soon put together, and the result was the landlord's son went off with a barrow on a foraging expedition, and in time returned with the 'necessary.' For ourselves, we were shown into a clean and neat little sitting-room, evidently for show, not use, with shell ornaments and wonderful figures in stone china on the mantelpiece, all of which we duly admired, as well as the highly-coloured prints of coaches and horses; red, blue, and orange tints predominating, they were striking productions certainly, if not artistic ones. The horses were strange-looking animals; the worthy artist had, it would appear, a supreme contempt for anatomy, and his perspective was even more astounding. But the landlady seemed very proud of her paintings; she thought them very life-like, and why should we undeceive her?

We did not expect much here in the way of food, and so were pleased and quite contented when we learnt we could have ham and eggs—the everlasting, never-failing ham and eggs. The landlord appeared to be a well-informed individual, and, moreover, of a communicative disposition, so I indulged in a long chat with him over a pipe in his own kitchen, which I must say was a much more cheerful and liveable apartment than the room we occupied. Much of local history and traditions had he to relate, but space will not permit me to repeat his long-winded stories here; they consisted of much chaff and a little grain, and sadly required winnowing. As I noticed by my map there were nothing but small villages marked thereon till we reached Harro-

gate, which we could not possibly do that day, I questioned him closely about the inns on the way, and especially as to our quarters for the night; but he soon set my mind in that respect at rest. At the end of our next stage, at Catterick Bridge, there was, he told me, a famous inn, with every accommodation a weary traveller could desire—stabling for over sixty horses, and the rest of the establishment in keeping.

We had a delicious day for travelling; there was plenty of sunshine, and cloud too for that matter, but there was no glare of light. Soon after leaving Fox Hall we came to some cross-roads and felt doubtful as to which to take; the one straight on appeared from our travelling map to tend in the right direction, but it looked so little used we scarcely liked to venture on it; the others all bore the impress of carriage wheels, and were in capital order. But experience had also taught us that often the old mail or turnpike roads are nowadays in many parts of the country those the least employed; the reason being the local traffic between two adjacent towns or villages causes those particular portions of the roads to be well used and cared for, whilst the through traffic of the old road is *nil*, and thus it has in parts the appearance of a mere byway. Whilst stopping to get out our road-book in order to solve the important question of route, a boy came into sight a little distance off and I at once hailed him. He shouted in reply, 'There be a sign-post at the corner, she'll tell 'ee.' A search, however, failed to discover the post; so I went after the lad, and on

my saying 'There is no sign-post at all,' he looked amazed, and evidently did not believe me. A promise of sixpence if he would come and show it to us brought the worthy youth back to the cross-roads. On arriving at the spot, he looked about bewildered; however, he could not deny the evidence of his own eyes, and after assuring me the way to Catterick Bridge was straight on, said, 'Well, I'm blest if I knows what's come to her; she wur ther' yesterday, for I seed her mysel', and she wur a good 'un too.' 'Perhaps someone has cut it down and used it for firewood,' I suggested. 'Maybe, but she wur ther' last noight, that I'll swear.' And so we left him, and the mystery of the vanished sign-post unsolved.

Whilst on the subject of sign-posts, I may here state that they are, alas! in the present year of grace mostly 'conspicuous by their absence.' I think I may safely say all the way from Scotland we had not come across more than six, and of these two were illegible, and one had somehow got turned round and was therefore worse than useless. And it is the same with the milestones; these are generally in a dreadfully dilapidated condition, and I believe I am under the mark in stating that at least one half of them throughout the country, if any remnants of that proportion exist entire, are totally indecipherable, and of the remaining half a small portion only are perfect and easily read, though with previous knowledge gathered from a preceding milestone they may be made out; but if on your journey you once lose count, you have considerable trouble to recover yourself. Nine, ten, twenty-one, and so

forth in half-obliterated Roman numerals may read almost anything. Of course there are some grand exceptions to the rule. Driving into Ripon, we found for a few miles on our way some capital and most distinct new iron milestones—if one may use such an expression. These particular ones are indeed by far the best I have ever seen in any part of the world; they are solid and strong, with raised lettering (not painted on), not liable to get chipped or easily disfigured, and each one has a hand pointing in different directions, so that there can be no mistake. But, unfortunately, it is not when in sight of a town that milestones and guide-posts are most useful, but when traversing lone black moorland roads, or when passing through a sparsely populated district, then it is they are a real friend to the traveller.

After leaving the cross-roads, we had a long toilsome ascent of some miles, and at the top of this we came upon a lone clump of Scotch firs. We were now on the highest portion of the mail road between London and Scotland; at least so the landlord at Fox Hall told us this spot was. From our vantage height we had a glorious prospect all around, bounded only by the circling grey of the distant hills and far-off moors, and, overhead, the illimitable expanse of wide blue sky looked tenderly down on all the vast panorama. Elevated and desolate as this fir-crowned hill was, I would a thousand times rather drive over here than over the dreary, cheerless, and storm-swept Stainmoor.

A few miles of easy descent brought us to the once far-famed Scotch Corner, where four of the

chief old mail roads meet; it must have been a regular coaching Clapham Junction in the olden times.

Farther on, to the left of the way, we passed what appeared to have been once a fine old manor-house, now left to desolation and decay, a sad picture of Time's destroying hand—a home once of luxury, now the sole abode of the hooting owl and lonely bat—a ruin, around which long rank grasses, nettles, docks, and entangled briars flourish!

We presently arrived at the banks of the Swale, swollen by the recent rains and hurrying along in an irresistible flood. It was pleasant to listen to the cool splashing and sullen gurgling of its bounding waters. We crossed this fine river on a magnificent old stone bridge, the other side of which was the Catterick Bridge Hotel. Seen from the bridge, this ancient hostelrie looked most inviting. It was a long, low, rambling building of two storeys, with a capital garden leading down to the river. On driving up close to it, the appearance of the house improved, if anything; it was whitewashed, and looked quite fresh and clean; its many and ample bay windows told of good rooms within—in fact, it was the very picture of what a country hotel should be. No one was visible about, so I jumped down, and, finding the door open, entered. There was a table in the hall, and on it a hand-bell, which I rang, and in answer to the summons the landlord's daughter came forth. 'We want rooms and accommodation for our horses,' I said without hesitation, or thinking it even worth while to ask first as to whether we could be

taken in. Judge then our surprise when, instead of a ready answer and a hearty welcome, which we had quite expected, the reply came, 'I'll go and see my father.' Soon the girl returned saying, 'We have no rooms.' Somehow, I did not quite believe the astonishing statement, as, judging from outside appearances, two coach loads ought not to have filled the house. 'No rooms! surely you must be mistaken,' I said. The damsel appeared confused, which convinced me I was right in my conjectures, though the reason for so strangely refusing us, especially after what we had heard of the inn, puzzled me not a little. To my request to see the landlord, she said she would send him to me. Soon mine host appeared, and said 'he was very sorry, but all his rooms were occupied by his own visitors.' This I did not believe any more than the girl's story, so I said, 'Anyhow, you have plenty of accommodation for the horses, so you must take them in, and meanwhile let us have some tea, and then we'll see what we will do.' I had never before had such a reception at an hotel in any part of the world ; so for the moment I felt as non-plussed at the landlord's refusing us quarters as I should have been had I walked into a London shop to make a purchase, and been told by the proprietor thereof that his things were only for show and not for sale. Our reception, too, was in such marked contrast to the genuine hospitality shown to us at Barnard Castle.

The landlord appeared surprised when I quietly told our man to take the horses on to the stables, and get our belongings out of the carriage. I sup-

pose he expected, after what he had said, we should drive on.

However, we were shown into a very comfortable sitting-room, and I at once ordered tea, and whilst it was getting ready, strolled out to see how the horses were faring. Nothing could have been better—capital stables, plenty of good sweet hay and splendid corn, oats and beans, with a few split peas, and a man hard at work assisting our groom. So ho! so ho! I thought to myself, there's a change in the programme. Being satisfied as to the welfare of our steeds, I turned to leave the stables, when I encountered mine hospitable host entering them, and he remarked to me, looking at the horses, in, however, quite a different tone to his former one, 'You've got a fine pair o' tits there, sir, real beauties' (tits appears to be a favourite term for small horses in Yorkshire). 'Yes, they are not bad ones,' I replied; 'and, by the way, may I ask what is the idea of yours of sending visitors away, and yet running an hotel?' 'Don't say anything more about it,' he replied, 'we'll do what we can to make you comfortable for the night; you see the real fact is——' Here a servant came to say tea was ready, and 'madam' was waiting. So I told the landlord I would go indoors and try his cheer, and afterwards hear all about the 'real fact.'

On passing the low broad bay window of our room I looked in, and saw our repast prepared, and found on entering a sumptuous Yorkshire tea laid out; there were chops, eggs, toast, hot cakes, and a wholesale supply of delicious cream, &c., &c. Surely affairs were looking brighter. I endeavoured, by

questioning the girl who waited upon us, to discover the reason of our cool reception, but failed in my attempt, so I determined after our meal was over to 'beard the Douglas in his den.'

I fortunately found mine host in the bar alone, comfortably smoking a pipe over a glass of grog. He evidently knew how to take care of himself. Ordering another for myself, I filled my briar-root and began the attack. Said I, 'I've always heard about Yorkshire hospitality, but you don't seem overburdened with that commodity in this particular part of the country.' 'May be not,' was the laconic and not very clear rejoinder. 'Well now, supposing we come to the point,' I continued: 'you know you have abundance of room and to spare, how was it you hesitated so at taking us in; surely with a carriage and pair you could not doubt our ability to pay our bill, so now what was your reason in wishing to turn us away?' 'Well, sir, you're rather hard on me, really you are; we scarcely ever do turn visitors away; but the real fact of the case is, I am simply a farmer and not an hotel-keeper; but my landlord, when he let me the land, insisted upon my having this as the house, and moreover insisted on my keeping it up as an inn, chiefly for the accommodation of his guests and friends, and those who come here to attend the races for a fortnight in the year, which, however, as you see, obliged me to keep the place open for the rest of the year. I objected at first to this; but said he to me, "You need not mind about it, there are no travellers on the roads nowadays, and so, save for two weeks or so a year, no one

will ever trouble you." Upon this, I agreed to take the farm; and truly till lately we have not had any travellers to entertain, but what with bicyclists and people out on driving tours like yourself, we don't get much quiet now; and begging your pardon, sir, it's only natural like (not caring to be an hotel-keeper, or otherwise than I am, a plain farmer) to want to have my own home a little to myself; not but what, if I saw they were really put to inconvenience like yourself, I would do my best for anyone. And now, sir, I hope you will kindly accept my explanation and make yourselves quite comfortable, and pardon me, and say no more about it.' To which, after hearing all mine host had to say for himself, I at once agreed, and, to make a long story short, half an hour saw us capital friends, and over his grog and pipe he related to me wonderful stories about the place, of incidents that occurred in the olden days when it was one of the most famous hostelries between London and the North, of the strange doings that went on there, and of the wild freaks of certain lords and 'young bloods;' how some horsed the coaches themselves, and drove them as well, and now and again by way of an exciting change 'upset the whole affair;' and how one Lord Darlington, afterwards the first Duke of Cleveland, had a wing built to the hotel for his own especial use and that of his chosen friends, 'wild ones the whole lot.' Then he related many of their mad pranks, and how the aforesaid noble lord kept here his own cellar of wine, and how he and his companions sat up nightly gambling at cards 'in a style a lord ought to gamble.' The grog

(the landlord's, that is) was replenished from time to time, the stories grew wilder, more exciting, and at last terribly interesting, and certainly of a sort not relatable here, and we chatted and laughed and anon grew serious over some ghostly legend, till at last we found ourselves nodding in our respective arm-chairs. And then I suggested it was about time to retire to rest, and bade my entertainer good-night.

CHAPTER XIX.

A Haunted Inn—Early Rising—Old Roman Remains—A Chapel under a Bridge—Lord Darlington's Rooms—Easby Abbey—Richmond Castle—A Legend of King Arthur—Weather bound—Ripon—A Chamber of Horrors—Fountains Abbey—Harrogate—Knaresborough—The Dripping Well—Saint Robert's Cavern—Eugene Aram and his Victim—Four Jolly Priests—Quaint Old Inscriptions—Bolton Priory—A 'Griesly Sight'—The Abbey Despoilers—The Strid—A Pretty Tradition Spoilt—Ilkley—Mysterious Monuments—The Valley of the Wharfe—Otley—The Ducking Stool—Harewood Castle and Church—The Knights of Old—Ancient Tombs—A Famous Judge—Leeds.

Our bed-room at the Catterick Bridge Hotel, with its ancient furniture and general faded appearance, was not exactly a cheerful chamber; indeed, the thought forcibly struck me as I entered it, what a capital sketch it would make for a picture of a Haunted Room! However, I was far too tired to think of sketching, and neither of us having any faith in ghosts, its eerie look troubled us but little, and we were both soon in dream-land. We must have slept for some time when we were awakened by what sounded to us as though somebody was gently tapping a tour door. I at once rose, and, lighting a candle, looked out into space. Nobody was there. Then suddenly I heard what sounded to me like a light footstep, as though some one was going down-stairs. I looked over the banisters, but though I most certainly and plainly heard the pat, pat,

patter continued, I could see absolutely nothing. I certainly was not dreaming, being unfortunately very wide awake. Then the sounds ceased, and all was silence, save the solemn tick, tick, tick, of the old grandfather's clock on the landing, which sounded preternaturally loud. Were we actually in a haunted house, and had I positively come across, or heard, a real live ghost, or what caused those strange sounds? Not being able to solve the problem, I retired to bed again and listened; curiosity and a sort of undefined nervousness prevented me from sleeping readily. Just, however, as I was about dropping off, once more came the tapping sounds. I jumped up at once; the mystery was solved; the tapping was caused evidently by a rat gnawing at our door. Taking the poker and a light, I sallied out. My conjecture was correct; there surely enough was a big, fat, overfed rat, hurriedly making for the staircase, down which he went, flop, flop, flop, not easily seen in the uncertain candle-light. Though not over pleased with the discovery, still I had the satisfaction of feeling that I had laid the ghost. Had not, however, master rat ventured forth once again, the sounds, that appeared to me the first time to be as of somebody tapping at our door and afterwards tripping downstairs, would have remained unaccountable.

In spite of my mild dissipation of the previous evening, and in spite also, it may be, because of the episode of the rat, I rose early the next morning; in fact, the sun shone so brightly in our room, I could not have slept on even had I felt so inclined. As a rule, I must confess I am not what is called an early

bird; the early worm is not for me, at least not in towns where there is nothing to reward you for your virtue, save a peep at smoky chimneys and an array of servants cleaning doorsteps.

But in the country matters are quite on a different footing. There is a wonderful freshness and a beauty in the early morning, unequalled by any other portion of the day; the air then is so clear, and pure, and fragrant, the leaves of the trees and the hedgerows are all sparkling with innumerable drops of dew, which flash forth ruby, topaz, and opal in the sun. The birds are all chanting their anthems of gladness and liberty with the clearest of notes, and all Nature seems rejoiced at having parted with the gloom of night.

Ruminating somewhat in this fashion, and thinking after all now that I was up what in the world I should do with myself till breakfast time, I was suddenly aroused from my reverie by the landlord's hearty voice. 'Glad to see you up, sir; you're one of the right sort—rise with the lark. So do I; nothing like being up betimes. Now what do you say to a ramble across yonder,' pointing indefinitely to some fields, 'and see what remains of the old Roman wall, that is, if you don't mind the damp—only dew, and that never hurts anyone.' 'Oh! I don't mind the dew,' I replied; 'I shall be only too pleased to go.' I soon found out I might as well have been walking along a country brook as through the long lank grass, for my boots, supposed to be waterproof, were certainly not dew proof, and they were soon thoroughly wet through. However, we reached the wall at last,

or rather that portion of it that remained above ground, and my guide pointed out to me an inscription on one of the stones. After a vain endeavour to make anything out of it, I carefully copied it, in case anyone else might be more fortunate than myself in puzzling the meaning out. It was as follows: WAKCM. Please note the reversed D.

And now, after a hearty and a regular Yorkshire breakfast—a meal that would astonish a Londoner in respect of the variety and excellence of the repast—I placed myself once more at the service of my now friendly host, to see what else he might have to show me. He took me over the old house, and then into the garden, where he pointed out what used to be a small secret chapel, built right under one end of the bridge, and now used as a coal-cellar by my worthy guide. The tradition handed down might be true, that this place was really used as a secret chapel; but at any time such a vault-like chamber must have been damp, dark, and forbidding. And then who used it? and how could it have been built so close to the highway without 'the other side' learning what was going on? and how could the worshippers assemble without being discovered? are pertinent questions easier asked than answered—at least the landlord could not reply to them satisfactorily. However, I felt a considerable interest in the spot, as it looked as though it possessed a history. Mine host had had a hole cut through the arched stone roof to the roadway above, and thus procured an entry for his coals—practical but unromantic man! Whatever may have been its uses

in times past, it had evidently been designed for some special purpose, and was well worthy of inspection.

The bridge itself called forth my unqualified admiration. It is a beautiful stone structure, boldly designed and strongly built, as it need be to hold its own against the impetuous Swale. The landlord pointed out to me how the bridge had been widened and altered. The old original bridge was a wonderfully narrow affair, hardly affording space for a carriage; indeed, I doubt much if it was intended for more than men and cattle. It was built early in the fourteenth century, and was a wonderfully bold production for that time. Wonderful I have said; but when I remember the grand old castles, abbeys, ancient halls, and manor houses, &c., I recollect that it is our ancestors who knew how to build, and we, their enlightened descendants, who have yet to learn how to follow in their footsteps with advantage in this respect.

I noticed by a milestone on the bridge (a legible one) that the distance to London was from here by the direct road 225 miles, being a difference of three miles to the distance given in 'Paterson's Roads.'

We now went indoors again, and inspected the wing built for Lord Darlington. The rooms were very fine, with lofty ceilings, one of which was enriched by a coat-of-arms and motto in high relief. The hotel itself was a curious, old-fashioned, rambling building, well worth going over, and a capital example of what the good old coaching inns of our forefathers were like. On the ample landing of the

staircase—our ancestors liked plenty of elbow-room —I noticed the ancient pedestal clock, my friend of the night, still going and keeping excellent time, though it must have seen many generations of owners. Poor old despised clock! put aside in a corner, evidently to be out of the way as being out of date, and yet the showy American timepiece and useless French clock that have usurped your place are, compared to you, but worthless rubbish. You will, in all probability, be in vigorous existence, and marking with accustomed accuracy the passing hours, when your foreign rivals will be long worn out and done for.

One interesting fact my host told me, that before him, for the last one hundred years, there had only been two tenants. The initials of the last one, 'J. F., 1821,' he pointed out to me, laid in dark flints, at one end of the extensive cobble pavement which fronted all the long row of stables. On this pavement, in the olden days, a blade of grass would have had but a poor chance of existing, and now it costs £3 a year to keep it tolerably clear of weeds.

As we found there was a delightful walk from our inn of a little over three miles to the quaint old-world town of Richmond, and also that there was a fine ruined abbey to be seen on the way, we determined to devote the morning to exploring these places. Easby Abbey is a gem of a ruin. Nature here has done her best. The many trees of rich foliage, some gnarled and moss-grown, the bright, clear river murmuring over its pebbly bed, the flower-bedecked sward, the wealth of greenery



RICHMOND CASTLE

around, and peep of bold blue hills beyond, form a scene of almost enchanting beauty. Man has supplied the ruins necessary to give a human interest to the spot, Nature has done the rest. A fitting memorial of the old monks is Easby; ivy has claimed the old fane for her own, and decorated it as only ivy can. We wandered long and lovingly about the spot; the warm sunlight fell softly on the abbey walls and on the trees around, as though in love with the once hallowed pile. The rooks above were holding noisy matins on their own account, the summer wind made gentle music with the rustling leaves in harmony with the melody of the running water. What more of beauty could the heart desire? The earth has not a fairer spot to show.

Now on to Richmond—a delightfully romantic town—with its bold castle-crowned height, its antique buildings, its grass-grown streets, its gurgling river, and glorious landscape around. It was George IV., I think, who declared the prospect from the old tower here to be the finest he had ever beheld. The castle is a grand building; its keep rises to the height of a hundred feet, and its walls are eleven feet thick, and these again are strengthened by mighty buttresses—solid work this. The lowest chamber of the keep is worth observing, on account of the massive octagonal pillar from which the groined arches of the vaulted stone roof spring, and also for the rusty old iron rings still existing attached to it. And how shall I describe the view from the summit? A vast expanse of woods and fields, of hills and dales, of river and distant suc-

cession of moorlands stretching away and away till lost in a misty purple haze. Alas! any word-picture of such a scene must utterly fail to do justice to it; rather would I leave it to the imagination of the reader.

Tradition says that in a mighty cavern somewhere beneath the castle walls, in a deep enchanted sleep, lie King Arthur and his warriors bold, awaiting the day of England's need. And there is a legend to the effect that many many years ago a certain citizen of the town, one Potter Thompson, by some strange chance one night discovered the entrance to the magic cave. On one side of this was hung a sword, on the other a horn. Looking down upon the sleeping multitude Thompson lifted his hand to the sword and half raised it out of its sheath, but he let it fall again, frightened by the stir among the sleepers, and terror-stricken he fled, and as he ran he heard a mysterious voice crying:—

> Potter, Potter Thompson!
> If thou hadst either drawn
> The sword or blown the horn,
> Thou'dst been the luckiest man
> That ever was born.

It was late in the afternoon when we left Catterick Bridge, and, bidding good-bye to our entertaining landlord, once more resumed our wanderings. At Leeming, a small village we passed through, we noticed a quaint old hostel, which had evidently seen better days, which possessed a bit of art work in the shape of a very fine oak (presumably) door; certainly there was ample evidence that some village

hand had done its best to spoil the beauty of the carving by some thick coats of paint bestowed in a most liberal manner, but still enough could be made out to show that originally it had possessed considerable merit. It was a source of some wonderment to us how this doorway should have found a position amid such untoward surroundings, when it suddenly struck us that it would just suit, in shape and size, the secret chapel under the Catterick Bridge, and we felt, on closer inspection, convinced that it had found its way here from that place.

The beauty of the scenery we were now driving along almost baffles description. It was a scene that would have taxed the powers of even the renowned George Robins to have described, concerning whose talents in this respect a story is related that a certain gentleman being tired of an estate he had recently purchased, placed it in the hands of the famous auctioneer to dispose of. Calling some time afterwards at the office, the gentleman said he had read a most charming description of a property for sale in that day's 'Times,' and desired to know further particulars. 'Why,' replied Mr. Robins quietly, 'that's your own place.' 'My place,' said the astonished owner, 'why, I had no idea it was half so beautiful; I'm not going to part with such a lovely spot.'

Our road was now simply perfection, smooth as a board, soft for the horses' feet, and level—three excellent and rare qualities—and so we spun along at a famous pace. After traversing nine miles of as pleasant a country as there is anywhere to be found,

we came to the little hamlet of Londonderry. A sign-board, with a well-painted design upon it, called our attention to a small, unpretending country hostelrie, but which looked neat and clean, and moreover had stabling attached. We, therefore, determined to bait here. There was a welcome surprise awaiting us on entering the inn, in finding a snug and cheerful sitting-room, and, what is more, a landlady to match. To our query as to what we could have for dinner, we half feared and were prepared for the usual reply of late, that 'they could only offer us ham and eggs.' What was our delight to learn then, we could have roast mutton, vegetables, sweets, and cheese to follow! To-day we certainly fared well, and the dinner was excellent.

It was well our lines had fallen, for the time, in pleasant places, for while we were enjoying the good fare within the sky without suddenly grew overcast, and the rain came down in torrents. For a time we watched the steady downpour, but found it a poor amusement; our aneroid was steadily falling, and we had every prospect of having to continue our journey in the wet. At seven o'clock it was raining as hard as ever, and after a consultation as to what under the circumstances was the best course to pursue, we sent for the landlady, and asked if by any possibility (the inn was a very small place) she could manage to put us up for the night. She said she would see, and eventually she managed it. We had a small and scantily-furnished room, but the linen was clean, and we slept well that night at the tiny wayside hostelrie at Londonderry.

On awakening next day to a glorious morning, we found the sun was shining brightly, and the air was clear and fragrant after the rain of the previous night. A pleasant drive of some dozen miles brought us to the picturesque little cathedral town of Ripon. Baiting the horses here, and not forgetting our own requirements, we afterwards strolled out to inspect the ancient minster, a fine old building which must be of great interest to archæologists, on account of the many different styles of architecture contained in it, ranging from the sturdy Norman, and even earlier Saxon, to the light and graceful decorated Gothic. We did not descend into the crypt, nor view the chamber of horrors, as my wife called it, which is known by the name of Bone House, a vault paved and walled with human bones—four feet deep on the floor and six feet thick round the walls are these ghastly relics of poor frail mortality—we preferred the green trees and bright sunshine; besides, was not Fountains Abbey only three miles off, and why should we waste time in dismal sights? So we started for those grand old ruins. A pleasant walk along a pleasant country road brought us to Studley Royal. Here we found a large party already assembled, ready to be handed over to the tender mercies of the guide, with his long-winded histories and theatrical surprise peeps and tricks. We managed by fair words and bribery to be allowed to visit the ruins at our leisure and in peace.

An old abbey, such as this, appears to me to be the culmination of all that is romantic and beautiful in architecture; they are dreams in stone, poems in

buildings erected to the glory of God and to the glory also of the Church militant; they are a glory to their age and the genius of their builders. The men who raised these wonderful structures are not of our day or time. We can look and admire, but we cannot do the like.

Only four materials were allowed in the construction of these glorious edifices—stone and lead, wood and glass. Simplicity is the soul of beauty. The greatest painters use the fewest colours.

Surely since the world began until now, no works of man's hand that have ever been raised upon this mother earth have equalled in beauty these grand old religious fanes. Let us endeavour for a moment to restore and re-monk this superb old ruin, as it was in the days of old. Look up towards the high altar, all ablaze with lights and jewelled art, before which the solemn monks are chanting: what a charm of vanishing perspective, of light and shade, of well-ordered space, and pleasing, blending forms! Cast your eyes upwards to the soaring stone vaulting, half lost in a hidden mystery of colour dimness, caused by the sunlight being softened and filtered through those rare windows of walled light. Look at all this and much more, the exquisitely carved oak, quaintly humorous, yet somehow strangely enough in harmony with the whole; look at the finely chiselled stone, inanimate yet full of life, and tell me has the world ever seen the like? The world has not the mighty faith of old. Superstition, you say, good reader—well, be it so; I prefer a glorious superstition to a dead unbelief.

As we retraced our steps Riponwards, evening stole upon us calm and golden. Against the luminous orange sky the old cathedral tower stood grandly out, a mass of cool grey; the winding river had caught the glow of the west, and flowed on, a streak of liquid gold, and here and there a window gleamed in the light, and one restless vane flashed ever and anon. Away above in the silvery blue was the pale ghost of the crescent moon dimly visible. The drowsy wind was whispering plaintively through the quivering trees. It was the lovers' hour, a time of peace and deep tranquillity. 'What an evening for a drive!' we both exclaimed; 'why should we not make a stage on to Harrogate in the quiet gloaming.' Why not, indeed; what could be more delightful? And so we hurried along, and ordered the phaeton to be got ready as soon as possible, and were, without any unnecessary delay, once again on our way. The day was dying fast—only a few faint lines of crimson and amber were left in the sky, against which the nearer trees and houses stood out almost black.

At Harrogate we remained over three days 'doing the place,' drinking the waters, which left a taste as of copper in our mouths for hours afterwards. I wonder are certain people so enthusiastic over them because they are so nasty? One invalid at our hotel (about the only one, by the way), sent to the spa for the benefit of his health, wise in his generation, told me with a knowing look he took the waters in the shape of a bath, and found them, taken thus externally, equally as efficacious and a great deal more agreeable than internally. And possibly he was right

(doctors notwithstanding), for I doubt not but that the fine invigorating air—the best of all tonics—the change of scene, and the simple and regular diet prescribed, have as much to do with cures as the evil smelling and worst tasting waters.

We devoted one day of our sojourn here to a visit to the picturesque little town of Knaresborough. Not much remains of the once fine old feudal stronghold there, though it was an extensive building in its day, covering altogether considerably over two acres. As a specimen of its strength, it is worth while to notice the massiveness of the walls of the keep; these are no less than eighteen feet thick, all of hewn stone. Before the age of gunpowder such a castle, properly defended, could only have been captured by starving the garrison into submission.

The famous dripping well next claimed our attention. This is situated in a romantic glen, and consists of a hollow in the rocks, over a projecting ledge of which the waters trickle down in innumerable rills, at the rate of twenty gallons a minute. This is also a petrifying well, the water being strongly impregnated with carbonate of lime. According to tradition, at the foot of this rock the renowned Mother Shipton was born, a rather strange place for tradition to select for such an interesting event.

But what interested us most at Knaresborough was Saint Robert's Chapel, a cavern hewn out of the solid rock on the side of a hill, just on the outskirts of the town. It is but a small chamber some ten feet square and about eight feet in height, at one end of which are the remains of what has evidently been

an altar, also chiselled out of the stone, and which bears evidences of being simply but effectually decorated in the Gothic style. Close to the entrance doorway is a rudely sculptured and much weathered figure of a warrior with raised sword, as though guarding the approach. This interesting cavern-chapel is reputed to have been hollowed out by one Saint Robert of Knaresborough, a religious recluse.

This saintly abode was afterwards the scene of a dreadful murder. It was in this very cave that Eugene Aram and his two accomplices, John Houseman and Daniel Clarke, met to divide their unlawful spoils. The two former had previously planned to do away with Clarke, so as to increase their share of plunder. This they did, and buried his body on the spot. How long years afterwards the deed was discovered by a thoughtless remark of Houseman's, and how Eugene Aram suffered for the crime, are matters of history and romance—truth which, if it were told as fiction, would be deemed utterly improbable, and the sensational creation of a morbid imagination. Like the ancient mariner, who, long years ago—when all things were possible, and there were golden cities in far-off Cathay, and El Dorados beyond the sea, and strange wonders in distant lands—having returned home, was relating for the especial benefit of his aged parents the many astounding sights he had witnessed, &c. And amongst other things he said he had seen a fish fly (the only true statement, by the way, in his whole story). 'There now,' said his enraged father; 'I will believe all the

rest, but that you have seen a fish fly, that is too much for me.'

Upon descending from the hermit's cave to the road, we encountered a carriage with four jolly looking priests in it, Roman Catholics we took them to be, and we thought what capital monks they would have made. The driver pulled up, and, pointing his whip to the hermitage, said: 'That's Saint Robert's Chapel, gentlemen.' The priests looked at each other. 'I am not going up,' said one; 'Nor I,' said another, 'too hot to climb.' 'What a fool the fellow must have been!' remarked the third, and at this they all laughed. And then the party drove away, but the conversation we overheard set us thinking a good deal. For those four worthies the life Saint Robert lived would evidently have had but few attractions. Doubtless their motto was to make the best of both worlds.

From Harrogate we had a glorious drive over some fine rolling moorland country to Bolton Priory, or Abbey, as it is more generally called. In some of the houses about Bolton we noticed built into the walls old carved stones and beams with strange inscriptions thereon and curious sculptures, possibly spoils from the old monastery. One consisted of a grinning demon chiselled in stone, with the legend beneath, 'Resist me, and I will flee.' On an old weather-browned beam in another cottage the following words are cut in quaint old English characters:—

Thow pat passes by pis way,
One Ave Maria here now say.

Writing of inscriptions reminds me of a most curious and somewhat uncharitable one we observed on passing through the little village of Nesscliff, in Shropshire, on a previous journey. It was boldly inscribed on a school building, and ran in this wise :—

God prosper and prolonge this public good :
A school erected where a chapel stood.

Bolton Priory, with its surroundings, is a sweet idyll for dreamers, a spot to be seen, not described. The building is not all in ruins; a portion of the old walls have been roofed and repaired, and this restored part is now used as a parish church.

In the shattered fabric's heart
Remaineth one protected part.

The half-completed abbey tower tells its own story and points its own moral. It stands proudly, mournfully, and unfinished, just as when the last builder left it over three centuries ago. Strangely enough, it is built so as to hide the stately west front of the old priory; why and wherefore so curiously placed is a problem difficult to solve. On the tower is an inscription, cut deeply in old English letters, informing the reader that one 'R ⌣' founded it; Richard Moon being the name of the last prior, who commenced the tower in 1520. It was a strange conceit to write names in those days thus enigmatically.

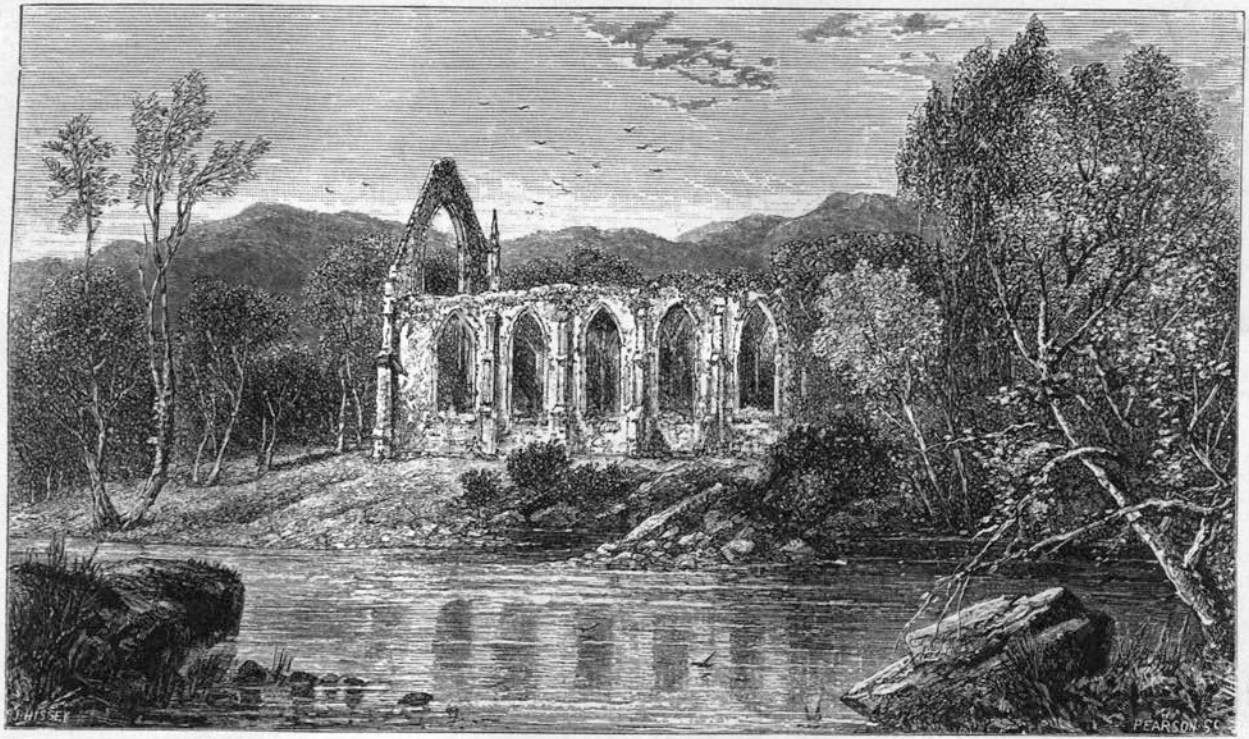
At the east end of the north aisle is the spot whereon stood a chantry chapel. In a vault beneath this the warlike family of Claphams, of Bramsley, had their place of sepulture—a race who appeared never to be happy unless there was some amusement for

them in the shape of fighting going on. According to Wordsworth they were interred upright:—

> Pass, pass, who will, yon chantry door;
> And through the chink in the fractured floor
> Look down, and see a griesly sight:
> A vault where the bodies are buried upright!
> There, face by face, and hand by hand,
> The Claphams and Mauleverers stand;
> And in his place, among son and sire,
> Is John de Clapham, that fierce esquire,
> A valiant man and a name of dread
> In the ruthless wars of the White and Red;
> Who dragged Earl Pembroke from Banbury Church,
> And smote off his head on the stones of the porch!

No longer now is the 'griesly sight' visible. When the old abbey was given over to devastation by the myrmidons of Henry VIII., the despoilers, as was their wont, actually dug up the long-interred dead, and broke open their coffins for the sake of the lead! Priors, nobles, monks, knights, all were disentombed —no distinction was made. And the old carved oak work, rich and rare, was actually employed as fuel to melt the lead!

What associations of the past do not these old ruins call up! Times have strangely changed since this old fane arose in glorious Gothic majesty, when through 'the long-drawn aisle' the pealing organ sounded to the chanting of the monks. The very high altar is now defaced and overgrown with mosses and weeds. Dead long years ago are the monks and worshippers at their shrine; their ashes even were not allowed to sleep in peace. Still beautiful is the once sacred pile, even in its decay, standing thus all forlorn. But a truce to romancing. A party of sight-seeing trippers have arrived, laughing and



BOLTON ABBEY.

screaming. Only the stern present is before us. More excursionists are coming; their noisy laughter and forced jests seem strangely out of place here. Let us go.

From the priory we walked up and along the Wharfe Valley, a delightfully wooded glen, made beautiful by rich foliage, grey, water-worn rocks, and a tumbling, foaming river. After a most enjoyable ramble we arrived at the Strid. Here the impetuous river, hemmed in by rocks on either side, becomes more impetuous still; from a width of fifty feet it is confined to a narrow channel only five feet wide. It was at this spot young Romilly met his death, as several who have foolishly attempted the jump have done since. It is not a difficult leap, but failure to reach the other side is certain death; the resistless rush of the water would overpower the strongest swimmer. It appears the young heir of Bolton had often taken the leap, but on this occasion he was suddenly checked by his greyhound hanging back in the leash, and was thrown into the boiling caldron of waters below and drowned—

> Now there is stillness in the vale
> And long, unspeaking sorrow:
> Wharfe shall be to pitying hearts
> A name more sad than Yarrow.

A servant who observed the catastrophe, returning to the boy's mother, too frightened to state the direct truth, asked, 'What is good for a bootless bene?' The Lady Adeliza, divining some terrible calamity had taken place, replied, 'Endless sorrow.'

There is a pretty tradition that, upon the loss of

her son, his widowed mother founded the stately Priory of Bolton, in which the monks were to say daily masses for the repose of his soul. Unfortunately for the tradition, which is otherwise not improbable, no mention of such an origin is even referred to in any of the MSS. of the Bolton monks; had such been the case, they could hardly have avoided mentioning it. But still more fatal to the legend is the fact that in the 'Monasticon Anglicanum' this very Romilly is mentioned as being a party to the transaction whereby the manor of Bolton was secured for the erection of a priory. His death must have occurred after that charter was granted. It is a pity to spoil such a touching romance; but then, 'facts are facts, sir.'

Returning to Bolton, we drove along a lovely valley to Ilkley, once an obscure village, now a famous spa, with several hydropathics, hotels, numerous shops, paved streets, gas, and all the luxuries of modern civilization. But its restful quiet, its peaceful rural beauty is gone for ever. Even the grand boulders that of old bestrewed its wild moors have been blasted and carted away for building purposes.

In the evening we wandered into the churchyard here, and inspected the three so-called Runic crosses. Runic, Celtic, Saxon, or whatever they may be, they are certainly very curious and most interesting relics of the unknown and undiscoverable past. Antiquarians have had many disputes and arguments over these, without any good result; one of whom, an authority, says: 'People insist upon calling these

monuments crosses, though they have not the smallest characteristic of a cross.' They certainly bear no resemblance to such now, being merely three obelisks of stone, broken at the top, and quaintly decorated with carvings; but bearing in mind the similarity of the pedestals to those of other crosses, notably the one at Eyam, and the fact of there being three in number, we concluded these pillars had at one time supported crosses. Paulinus is reported to have preached here about A.D. 626, and it is stated that where he baptized three crosses were raised. The idea, therefore, is not improbable that these are relics of those memorials, and if so, these stones with their quaint carvings are over a thousand years old. They may possibly have remained perfect till the year 1642, or thereabouts, as by order of the General Assembly of that date several such crosses were ordered to be broken up, as being objects of superstition. Indeed, these very stones actually did duty as gateposts, till a former vicar rescued them and restored them to the churchyard. Altogether the twisted knots, the scroll work, amongst which strange animals are introduced, are deserving the closest inspection. The workmanship of these shafts proves, at any rate, that at a very early date sculptured monuments of elaborate and artistic designs were executed and erected in England.

The next morning we continued our journey, driving down the valley of the Wharfe. On either side of us were sloping hills, richly wooded at their bases, and cultivated for some height, their summits consisting of undulating lines of purple moors.

This valley is eminently a beautiful one; it is neither too narrow to be gloomy nor too wide to lose its vale-like character, and the scenery varies pleasantly every mile or so of the way.

Presently we reached Otley, a busy little town, the capital of Wharfedale. In Yorkshire the Anglo-Saxon word 'dale' is still retained for valley, as in the case of some portions of Derbyshire: for instance, Dove Dale, Darley Dale, &c., and the word dalesman is frequently employed by the natives thereof.

Otley is a very ancient town; one of the first churches ever raised in England was erected here by Paulinus in A.D. 627, at which time it was the regal seat of the King of Northumbria. So it is of no mushroom growth, and can boast of a long historic past.

Otley was about the last place in England to retain that now forgotten instrument of punishment, a ducking-stool—an instrument especially employed for the punishment of scolds. Let an old poem describe its use:—

> Down in the deep the stool descends,
> But here at first we miss our ends;
> She mounts again and rages more
> Than ever vixen did before.
> If so, my friend, pray let her take
> A second turn into the lake;
> And rather than your patience lose,
> Thrice and again repeat the dose.
> No brawling wives, no furious wenches,
> No fire so hot but water quenches.

On now we continued till we reached the picturesque little village of Harewood, just before entering which we dismounted to inspect the ivy-

mantled ruins of an old castle of the same name. History is strangely silent as to how this ancient stronghold came to be dismantled; in 1630 it was in good order and repair. Possibly it was demolished by order of the Parliament some years later, as in 1646 several castles were commanded to be destroyed. And very effectually the destructive orders were carried out. The ruins are both picturesque and interesting, and form a very pleasing picture in the landscape.

The old church at Harewood is well worth inspection, as, too, is Harewood House, with its art treasures and 150 acres of pleasure gardens laid out by the famous 'Capability' Brown. The house is shown to visitors, but we decided to look over the church, in which we were told there were some fine monuments. We could nowhere discover the clerk; like a policeman, this individual is never to be found when wanted. So we ventured to call at the vicarage, intending to have sent in our cards, and ask permission to view the old edifice. On opening the garden gates we met a young lady, whom we presumed to be the vicar's daughter. She at once said we could have the keys, and most kindly returned to the house with us and procured them, and then left us to ourselves to inspect the church at leisure. The keys were evidently old ones, being of quaint and uncommon design. The approach was along an avenue of trees, fully half a mile in length, with overarching foliage above, a bit of Nature's Gothic work.

The interior of the building is plain, but the tombs are very fine and most interesting. Here is a

stately monument to Sir William Gascoigne, Lord Chief Justice of England, a famous name in history. Other very ancient and beautiful altar tombs there are with recumbent figures thereon, exquisitely chiselled in alabaster; one fine lady resting in stone effigy by her husband, a knight in full armour, we observed had rings on the tops of all her fingers. As these sculptured stones appear to be good likenesses of the noblemen and ladies they are supposed to represent, and reproduce also the dress and armour of the period in minute detail, they are deserving of most careful study. In observing the armour of the knights on old tombs, it is worthy of notice that very often the long-pointed boot or shoe (apparently so useless, but which allowed them to keep a firm hold of their stirrups, acting like a claw) has frequently been broken away, and the repairer, restorer, or whatever he pleases to call himself, has without sufficient knowledge or information restored these quite flat. During our travels we have noticed several thus wrongly restored. Unfortunately, the sharp, projecting pointed foot was easily broken and damaged.

Returning to our inn, ahead, where our road lay, we noticed the sky looked very red and thundery; but the ostler informed us it was often like that—it was only the smoke of Leeds; and morever, he told us that only last week two ladies driving in a pony-carriage actually remained over here for three days, they felt so sure each day that a storm was imminent, and would not proceed.

Driving into the sultry atmosphere and bustle, dust, and noise of the thronged streets of a busy

manufacturing town, threading our way past tram-cars and 'buses, was an unpleasant change from the restful, rural, quiet beauty we had so long been accustomed to. We had a tiresome hunt for an hotel in Leeds, and when at last we found one (the Queen's, where we had excellent quarters), it had no stabling, so that entailed another drive through strange streets and puzzling by-ways in search of accommodation for our horses. At last we discovered some livery stables, and after seeing to the comfort of our steeds we returned to the inn.

CHAPTER XX.

A Black Road—Wakefield—A Chapel on a Bridge—Black Barnsley—Sunshine and Mist—Wortley—A Luxurious Meal—Sheffield—A Search for Quarters—Smoke-room Stories—The Moors Again—Rocky Scenery—A Fine Prospect—Hathersage—The Grave of Little John—Castleton and its Wonders—Underground Scenery—The Pass of the Winyates—A Shivering Mountain—A Dangerous Bridge—Buxton—A Crowded Town—A Curious Mishap—Over the Hills—Bakewell and its Old Church—Haddon Hall—An Old-world Hostel—Nature Tamed—Oker Hill and its Tradition—The Darley Yew.

OUR road out of Leeds was a black one, and led us past many large collieries, a sight which caused our man to remark that 'the height of his ambition was to go down one'—ambition certainly considerably varies in different people. The road, I have said, was a black one; it was mended entirely with cinders, and what with the dark dust and the smoke from the engine pits the very cornfields we passed appeared to us to have a sombre instead of a golden hue. It was a grim landscape, all of a subdued grey, and continued so the whole way to Wakefield.

We had now once more got entangled amongst the network of manufacturing towns that dot this portion of the map of Yorkshire all over; there is no evading them except by making a long detour. However, the very necessity of having to pass through such ugliness only made us relish the fair green country the more.

Upon leaving Wakefield we came unexpectedly across a most interesting archæological relic, consisting of an old and very beautiful chantry chapel, erected right upon the bridge, leading out of the town, that here crosses the Calder. It is an exquisite bit of masonry mellowed and toned by the weathering of ages; it is richly ornamented with quaint carvings, such as only a mediæval workman could produce; the windows, too, are filled with elaborate tracery. It is now employed, we learnt, as a chapel-of-ease to the church. This most picturesque and romantically placed structure was erected thus by Edward IV. in memory of his father, who was killed at the battle of Wakefield, and in which he ordered daily Masses to be said for the repose of the deceased's soul.

Judging from our morning's stage we were quite prepared for an uninteresting drive on to Barnsley, but the country we passed through agreeably disappointed us. Indeed, at one or two places, notably at two large sheets of water surrounded by stilly, many-tinted woods, it actually reached the beautiful; but with the exception of the said water the road was not particularly attractive, nor till we came well within sight of Barnsley was it to be called ugly.

When, however, Barnsley came into view, situated high upon a hill, its character completely changed; the green world was a scarred desolation, given over to coal-pits, tramways, railways, gigantic mills, &c. Upon another hill some distance off we could just discern Bradford, or at least the tops of the tall

chimneys belonging to the place, for the houses of the town were lost in a haze of smoke.

'Black Barnsley' is a title that town is locally known by in Yorkshire, and all I can say is, it deserves it. Externally, our inn was in keeping with the place—a plain, gloomy-looking structure—but, internally, we were well cared for; our room was comfortable, linen clean, the food good, well cooked, and sent up tastefully to table; and without, our horses had the luxury of loose boxes and a plentiful supply of excellent corn. Barnsley evidently is not a place to be judged by outside appearances. The only drawback to our capital inn was the fact that there were some steam mills or works of some sort near by, and as these were running all night, the continued racket was not conducive to repose. However, in spite of this one drawback we rested fairly well, and the next morning saw us once again on our way.

Over night we had had our maps out, and discussed the homeward route. We had determined to have a look at the Peak country of Derbyshire on our way, but found that to do so would necessitate our once more going through Sheffield. Now we had most positively determined when we last left that metropolis of noise, blackness, and wealth—a town that suggested to us perpetual motion and everlasting din—that nothing would induce us to return there. So much for our determinations—see us this fine morning Sheffieldwards bound. It was a misty day for our journey; occasionally the mists would rise and reveal distant peeps of a hilly and

well-wooded country, with a sparkle of running water, and the gleam of a quiet pool, but, quickly descending again, all would be blotted out. It was a tantalizing day, and just because there was none, we felt an intense craving for a horizon, a longing for a distance for the eye to rove over. Still, the mists lent a pleasing mystery to the drive.

On our way we noticed by the roadside, looming up before us, silent, dim, and spectral, a tall obelisk, arriving at which we dismounted to observe it better. The result of our investigations was not very wonderful: we discovered upon it the words 'To Wentworth Castle, 3 miles, 1776,' and that was all—quite a mighty erection for the purpose; there is such a thing as consistency, even in sign-posts.

Our road now led us through a well-wooded park, and rising gradually we eventually emerged in a bright world of sunshine above the mists. Overhead was a clear blue sky, below a level sea as of cotton wool; in front of us a russet and purple continent of moorlands rose boldly out of this, and here and there, nearer at hand, were islands of fir-crowned hills. The effect was curious, and lent a sort of fairy-like enchantment to our drive.

At the picturesque village of Wortley we pulled up at a little unostentatious inn and baited our horses there. On inquiring what we could have in the way of refreshment for ourselves, the landlady said if we would just leave it to her she would do her best for us. Experience has told us, under such conditions it is well to leave matters with the landlady; consequently we did so, though, judging from

the place, we did not expect much. Imagine, therefore, our surprise, when in due course she, to use an American expression, 'sprung' a dinner upon us, consisting of a deliciously cooked hare, with all appurtenances, followed by a partridge and most excellent sweets. Not a bad meal for a little village inn to provide; in fact, we could have done very well without the partridge, having feasted sumptuously off the hare, but we made a show of demolishing the bird so as to avoid hurting the good landlady's feelings, who was cook as well as hostess.

We arrived at Sheffield in the evening, and found the town crowded; it was the eve of the Cutlers' Feast we were told, though that information in no way improved matters for us. In fact, we had a hard time of it driving from one hotel to another in search of quarters, the search being rendered more disagreeable by the knowledge that after (supposing we were so far fortunate) securing rooms for ourselves we should have to prospect about for our tired horses. However, not to linger over the dark side of the picture, in the end we were successful in our search, and in due course procured comfortable quarters both for our animals and ourselves.

During the evening I strolled into the smoke-room of the hotel to enjoy a contemplative pipe. However, I found the room crowded, and a heated political discussion going on. Presently politics gave way to a more general conversation; and during the course of the evening many were the anecdotes related, mostly in connection with certain citizens of the town, some well known, others

obscure. Over these the Yorkshiremen laughed heartily.

One of these many stories I must try and find room for, as a fair sample of the quality of the entertainment; and, as I shall give no names, whether the tale be true or not I can hurt no one by retailing it. It appears that a certain worthy inhabitant of Sheffield, who had risen from small beginnings to be quite wealthy, and a man noted for his saving habits, was one day dining at a restaurant in London. Upon leaving, after paying his bill, he was reminded that the amount did not include the waiter. Whereupon the North-countryman exclaimed, walking out, 'Ah! but aa didn't eat the waiter!'

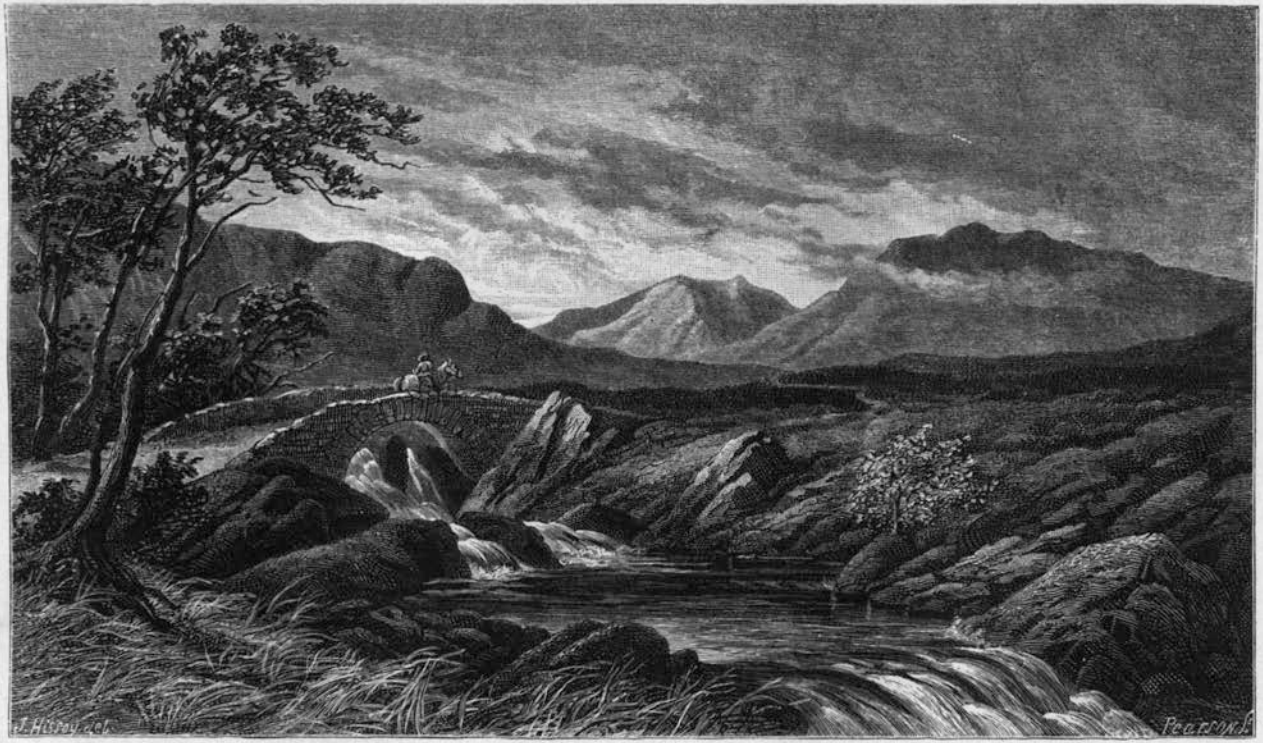
A suggestion of sunshine filtering through the smoke-laden atmosphere gave promise of a fine day, and tempted us to make an early start. We trotted quickly along the busy streets of Sheffield, and through its extensive and growing suburbs into the open country beyond. Once you are free from the town, the country around Sheffield is very beautiful, and even more than beautiful—it is romantic. Soon our road began to mount, then it was level and fair going for some distance, though at a good elevation, which afforded us charming peeps of hills beyond hills, all well wooded. Presently the moors began to appear—the glorious purple moorlands—the exhilarating air of which makes one feel as light-hearted and frolicsome as a schoolboy just out from his lessons.

Here we noticed a curious effect, and wondered if any others had ever observed it too. Right on

the extreme edge of the moor was a remarkable clump of trees, standing darkly out against the white sky; these had been formed by the bleak winds into an exact resemblance of a huge griffin proper, looking down over the valley upon us: wings, feet, body, and all the likeness was complete.

Now after a tedious two miles of stiffish collar-work we emerged right on the top of the moors, and a goodly prospect was before us. It was a glorious bit of moorland—a glowing expanse of purple heather, bestrewn with weather-scarred rocks, all grey and lichen-stained; and here and there we noticed a brilliant yellow flower, whose name was unknown to us, and many a bright bit of gorse, whose 'deathless bloom' told out well amongst the green, and grey, and purple around. The peculiar odour of the gorse, too; how fragrant it seemed! wafted to us on the open air (though so sickly in a room)—an odour I can only liken to a mixed scent of cocoanut and pineapple. As we drove along we noticed many bilberry wires, with their wax-like leaves and wine-stained fruit—a fruit in tarts not to be despised.

Passing on these bleak heights an old stone-built inn, with mullioned windows and extensive stabling, yclept Fox-house Inn—evidently a relic of the old coaching days—we came to some fine rock scenery. The road descended, and, crossing a grey, weather-worn, one-arch bridge, we found above us a series of rocky heights; these assumed strange shapes, and almost anything earthly—or for that matter, un-earthly—could be conjured out of them by the



ON THE EDGE OF THE MOOR.

imagination. One massive block of stone so curiously projected as to form a gigantic toad, with leering eyes, and mouth wide open ready to swallow us up, phaeton and all. It was a weird, wild bit of scenery, such as Salvator Rosa would have gloried to depict. Suddenly came a bend in the road, and what a view was before us; it was as though the world in front had dropped down! A charming and extensive prospect met our gaze—a valley stretching far away, bounded by emerald-hued slopes, with leagues of woods and fields of waving grain, with farmhouses peeping forth every here and there, and along the vale a winding river flowed like a ribbon of silver. The whole panorama was backed by a glimmer of blue hills, and looked very peaceful and mellow, all in tone under the soft gloom of a clouded sky. Long we lingered on this spot, drinking in the beauty and inspiration of the scene.

Descending now we had a delightful run down hill to the sleepy little hamlet of Hathersage, a village that boasts of having afforded both a cradle and a grave to the famous Little John, Robin Hood's sturdy henchman. In the churchyard his grave is shown, consisting of two upright stones about ten feet apart. Antiquarians have, of course, disputed over the fact of his being buried here; indeed, some in their opposition to the legend have gone so far as to say he never existed at all, or, if there really was such a being, state he was executed at York. Rather a curious kind of argument. However, for once it appears the evidence in favour of tradition is stronger than that against it, and so we

agreed to accept the story as true. Besides, there is or was an aged woman in the parish who declares her father told her he remembered distinctly seeing Little John's green cap and bow hanging up in the chancel of the church, and, after that statement, who could doubt the fact?

A pleasant journey in the gathering twilight brought us to Castleton. As we drove along, the incense of burning wood and peat came wafted to us on the evening air, and now and again also the warm resinous odour of pine trees. Country perfumes as well as sights and sounds are very refreshing to those long immured in smoky towns. Castleton, with its background of dark blue hills, standing out sharply defined against the luminous sky, its old ruined keep towering boldly over the little town, as though keeping watch and ward over the place, struck us as we approached to it as being a very romantic spot. The long low inn, with rustic seats in front, and tiny flower beds, looked both picturesque and inviting; and, moreover, we found the stabling was excellent.

We were up early next morning, and a scramble up to the old castle gave us a good appetite for our breakfast, after which meal we again proceeded on an exploring expedition. The famous Peak Cavern we could not well leave unseen, although we felt we had done almost enough in underground groping at Matlock, so we secured the guide and a boy to carry candles and blue lights to illuminate the cavern, or rather caverns, for there are a series of them. We spared neither time nor expense, and listened atten-

tively to all our guide had to say, but, truth to tell, we were not sorry to get out into the daylight and warm sunshine again. In fact, we considered the entrance to the cavern, which is to be seen for nothing, the best part of it. This is very fine, not to say impressive ; it comes upon you suddenly at the end of a narrow and gloomy ravine, and consists of a gigantic arch right in the face of the almost perpendicular limestone cliff, which, though steep, is not bare of vegetation. Out from the darkness of this mighty natural porch flows a limpid, leaping stream, as though hurrying away from the gloom into the glad sunlight beyond.

Castleton is certainly peculiar in one respect: the sights there appear to be as much under as above ground. There are caverns of different kinds to be seen, curious mines to explore, and sunless rivers and falls beneath the surface of mother earth. Caverns at the best are somewhat monotonous affairs, so we concluded we would leave the others here unseen, and imagine what they were like, though the Blue John Mine (known to the Romans) and the Speedwell Mine are both unique in their way—the one a vast chamber of glistering spar, the other of a sombre order, to reach which you have to make a journey in a boat along a subterranean canal for some distance, when you reach a grand cavern in which is a reputed fathomless pool.

Our next ramble was to the pass of the Winyates, literally the Wind-gates—a high-sounding title surely. The spot, a narrow mountain ravine, is picturesque and romantic enough, but scarcely to

be called grand or sublime; at least, it did not appear very dreadful to us under the bright sunshine. But the day and hour were hardly suited to the scene; possibly in the uncertain murky gloaming, or in gloomy weather, under a wild lowering sky, when the winds are blowing fiercely down the enclosed rift, howling and whistling in a fitful melancholy manner the while, it may appear very different, and seem even majestic and awful. Guide-book writers seem to have exhausted all the suitable and unsuitable adjectives they could find in describing this spot (why especially selected for its sublimity and awesomeness over many other similar and even finer rocky passes in Derbyshire is beyond our comprehension), and we could not but feel it had been overpraised; truly, it may be, that having heard a great deal about the Winyates was the real cause of our disappointment. Fame that goes before is as trying to scenery as to men.

The weather continuing delightfully fine, in the afternoon, after a further inspection of the wonders of Castleton, we decided to make a short stage of some dozen miles on to Buxton—a comparatively short journey, but by no means an easy one for the horses on that account; indeed, twenty miles of ordinary give and take road would have been far less exhausting to them. At once on leaving Castleton the quality of the way began to assert itself—it was stiff and continuous collar work; during the mount we made continual stops to rest our animals, drawing the phaeton right across the road, and placing large stones under the wheels, stones

that had doubtless been often enough used before for the same purpose. Looking backwards we had a glorious view of the valley we had left, and the little village of Castleton. Nearer at hand, to the right of us, stood the famous Mam Tor, 1,300 feet in elevation, one of the highest mountains of the Peak. This Tor the ostler told us is locally known by the name of the Shivering Mountain, on account of a strange peculiarity connected with it. It appears that the hill consists principally of a kind of loose shale, which rapidly becomes disintegrated, and portions crumbling away are constantly trickling or sliding down the face of the slopes and precipices. In winter time, after the breaking up of a frost, this crumbling business is most pronounced. However, when we passed the mountain was quiescent; it was not in a shivering mood, so we failed to see this wonder of Castleton. Nature was evidently in a bad humour that day, for another curious sight, in the shape of an ebbing and flowing well, we passed on our way was not working either; it was very provoking, but there was no help for it.

Bare, treeless hills and unlovely hedgeless fields, with rocks everywhere, a hard-featured landscape, russet and grey the chief colouring, such was the country we traversed that day. And to match the scene, a rugged road and a wild one was our lot; it was all up and down hill, with the brake in constant requisition.

Just before reaching Buxton, we had to pass under a railway bridge, on approaching which we noticed a man on the top, wildly gesticulating to us

and shouting as well. We deemed at first he was mad, but thinking it possible he might be sane, we pulled up to see what all the commotion was about. 'Whatever is the matter?' we shouted to him. 'We are repairing the bridge,' the gesticulating individual replied, 'and it won't be safe to drive under it for a few minutes.' Hardly had he finished speaking when a large iron bolt fell down into the roadway with quite a crash. This little matter over, we were allowed to proceed, but we had no idea before that there was any danger of this kind to be apprehended in passing under these viaducts.

There is no need for me to waste space in describing such a well-known spot as Buxton; I have no desire to enter into competition with guide-book writers, but I may say a word in praise of the fine bracing air of this famous spa, which, elevated as it is some 1,000 feet above the sea-level, is still protected from the cold winds by the barrier hills around. The atmosphere is wonderfully elastic and invigorating, it has all the sharpness and sparkle of champagne, and you can indulge in any quantity of it with no worse result than an alarming appetite.

We remained over a day at Buxton to give our horses a rest. Somehow the visitors at our hotel during that short time managed to learn all about our driving tour, and moreover appeared to take a great interest in it, and we were quite besieged with questions as to roads, the distance we did each day, what sort of accommodation we found on the way, how the horses stood the journey, &c., &c., questions

so often repeated by each party that they became a little monotonous; but they proved how in this day of railways there is still a deep love left for the road, the only natural way of travelling and of really seeing a country. There is all the difference in the world between being conveyed from one place to another, and travelling between the same spots. Indeed, driving so much over the deserted coaching roads of England, we could not but feel how very much the modern railway traveller loses. What glorious prospects do not those old roads afford—peeps of hill and dale, of wooded height and tumbling river, of quaint old-world villages and comfortable looking rural hostelries! A day's drive almost anywhere in England, and you will have added to your memory a hundred lovely bits and landscape revelations only to be had by the wanderer by road. Truly our ancestors who journeyed by coach, according to our present ideas, made haste slowly; but after all, though an excellent thing in its way, speed is not everything in this world; we are glad to hurry to our destination because we take no pleasure in the railway rush. If our ancestors went slower, they certainly had the opportunity of seeing and admiring the beauties, and of observing the characteristics, of the country they passed through.

We had a fine morning on which to continue our journey—a day of cloud and soft grey gloom, of alternate sunshine and peeps of bright blue sky, a day that died in a glory of melting rubies and gold. Autumn is the time for gorgeous sunsets and cloud effects. We endeavoured to make an early start,

but had some trouble to procure our bill. However, our account was forthcoming at last, and duly settled, and we did not grumble at having been kept waiting, for it was very reasonable.

The road out of Buxton began well; it led us along a romantic narrow rock-girt valley, the sun lighting up the projecting crags and promontories with a rich warm colouring; the contrast of light and shade, the combination of cliff and foliage, hill and river, was most pleasing. The scene would have been almost perfect had not the railway found a too easy and ready-made course along the glen; the straight line and embankments of the iron way were out of harmony with the apparent seclusion of the spot. I wonder if the enterprising railway promoters and engineers will leave a single Derbyshire vale in peace, and as Nature left it! Even Dove Dale has been threatened.

Spinning along the bit of level road here at a merry pace, we nearly left our man altogether behind. He had got down to make some slight alteration in the harness, and in remounting his foot had slipped, and he fell on his back into the roadway. We did not notice the accident, and a train coming along at the moment, we failed also to hear him cry out; the consequence was we drove on without him. Had it not been that we chanced to look round presently and noticed our groom was absent from his place, we should most assuredly have gone on thus. As it was, we had proceeded some distance. Returning in search, we found the poor fellow running along, very hot and very dusty. And here I may

remark, driving a pair of horses, with a lady, a man is not only a luxury but a necessity. I have driven without one, but it only made a toil of a pleasure. It is not always agreeable on arriving late and tired at your journey's end, and hungry probably as well, to have to wait and watch the horses being groomed, and to see they have their proper feeds (ostlers must be looked after in this respect or your horses will suffer), nor is it a supreme pleasure to have to be up seeing to the same in the early morning, when perchance you would rather be inspecting the town or the country around where you may have put up. And, besides, half the enjoyment of such a tour is the freedom of being able to leave your conveyance at any moment in the charge of your man, and to do a little walking, climbing, blackberrying, or whatever may take your fancy for the moment.

Leaving the valley now our road began to mount; the scenery grew wilder and bleaker the higher we rose, the prospect widened, till at last we reached an elevated height where we appeared to be at 'the top of everything.' Our eyes wandered over a great expanse: around us were slopes of mighty hills and moorlands beyond moorlands, melting away till lost in an azure mystery. Our vision was only limited by the illimitable blue. Soon we began to descend, passing through a bleak-looking village with rather a fine church. It was a puzzle to us why on such a spot a hamlet was ever built, and how the inhabitants existed or vegetated there. Now the descent became very severe; the brake was kept hard on the whole of the way. To the left the rocks running

along the tops of the moors looked more like a series of fortifications than anything else. As we descended the scenery became less forbidding: cliffs of limestone were on either hand, much channelled and weather-tinted, covered here and there with ivy and creepers, and well wooded at their bases. And through the trees we caught the gleam and glitter of a rippling burn, which splashed and gurgled along as only a mountain streamlet can, making music to the rustling of the trees and the wind.

As we journeyed on gradually the valley widened, the landscape became more sylvan, fields began to appear, then cottages and farmhouses, and with every mile the character of the scenery altered, getting, as we neared the quaint little old-world village of Ashford-in-the-Water, quite pastoral. The approach to Ashford between overhanging trees, through which the sunshine formed elongated patterns of white and gold on the road, was very beautiful. From here to Bakewell the landscape was quite idyllic. At the Rutland Arms, in the latter town, we found comfortable quarters. This inn was famous in the old coaching days as being one of the best houses between London and Manchester, and from the general look of the place, the extensive stabling, &c., we judged in those bygone times it must have done 'a roaring business.'

Bakewell possesses an exceedingly fine old church, an ancient time-worn structure, hoary with the age of centuries, a bit of architectural beauty, an art education in itself. Into this we wandered. Space will not permit of any long description of the inte-

rior of this grand old religious edifice. The rich Vernon chapel (founded 1360), with its fine altar tombs, interested us most, for here sleep under a handsome sculptured monument the mortal remains of 'Sir John Manners, of Haddon, knight, and Dame Dorothie, his wife.'

Leaving Bakewell, we drove down the Wye Valley, a dale almost, if not quite, as beautiful as its more famous, or perhaps I should say southern, namesake. Presently the old grey walls, the weather-worn towers and turrets of Haddon Hall came into sight on the hill side, peeping out of a mass of dark green foliage. What Englishman who has travelled at all in his own country does not know this grand old relic of

> the old baronial day,
> When men lived in a grander way,
> With ampler hospitality?

Haddon, with its time-stained walls, speaks in the presence of the past. For once the reality is more lovely than fiction, and imagination could not divine anything half so beautiful.

A certain sum of money judiciously expended (possibly a sight of the carriage also helped matters, as tending to show we were respectable) procured for us a key, and permission to inspect the old place at our leisure. We were only cautioned 'to be sure and carefully lock each door after us, as the Duke (of Rutland, understood) and his party were within.' Entering one chamber we discovered a table laid for the Duke's lunch, and servants about waiting. Remembering our instructions, we closed and carefully locked the door after us, forgetting at the moment it

was open when we entered, and it was not till after we had resumed our wanderings that the thought struck us that we had locked the servants in, and possibly His Grace out. However, I presume the matter was easily put right, for later on in the day I noticed the Duke making a water-colour sketch out of doors.

In the grand old ball-room we lingered long, endeavouring to picture to ourselves a bright vision of a certain night many many years ago, when

> Tapers shone, and music breathed,
> And beauty led the ball.

And that fair girl that seems so madly merry, easily noticed amid the gay crowd of high-born dames and courtly knights for her rare beauty, she is Dorothy Vernon. Just as the dancing, laughter, and mirth are at the highest, she steals silently from out the room, and is away with her own true love. But a truce to romance; the long oak-wainscoted room is silent enough and deserted now, and as we look around, and know what is and what has been, we ask ourselves

> Where are the high and stately dames
> Of princely Vernon's bannered hall?
> And where the knights, and what their names,
> Who led them forth to festival?

At Haddon our feet press upon hallowed, haunted ground. Much has changed since Dorothy Vernon eloped from hence in a romantic true-love style, but the sun shines through the great mullioned windows with their quaint diamond panes, just as it did centuries ago, and without it rests lovingly on the grey

old pile. The last view we had of Haddon, as we looked back, was a charming one, its ancient walls and many windows being gilded and lighted up by the warm rays of the low-lying sun.

On now we proceeded to Rowsley, where we halted a minute to glance at the famous Peacock Inn there, a delightful bit of old-world architecture, with its many-gabled roof, its stacks of chimneys, its quaint mullioned windows with their diamond leaded panes, its antique doorway with the curiously carved peacock in stone, and date beneath of 1653. Well known to both anglers and artists is the old Peacock.

Then we crossed over an old time-toned, weather-stained bridge, suggestive of the past and the cheery mail-coach. The valley now began to widen out, and presently we reached Stancliff, the residence of the world-renowned Sir Joseph Whitworth, inventor of the rifle ordnance that is named after him. Sir Joseph has tamed Nature. He found here a wild, rocky, fir-crowned crag; this he has planted, smoothed down, and laid out in gravel walks with rustic seats, with here and there a miniature fall and a pool. But it struck us this taming of Nature was not a success, the spot has too much the look of 'a place to spend a happy day' in. Rough Nature will not stand having her hair combed, any more than a wild picturesque village lad will.

Now Oker Hill came into sight; a strange isolated mound, standing boldly out in the centre of the valley, it appeared to us against all geological theory. Upon the top of this are two trees, telling

out plainly against the sky, and connected with these trees is a tradition. Many years ago two brothers met there and bade each other good-bye on the spot before going abroad to seek their fortunes in foreign climes. As a memorial of their parting they planted each a tree; one of these has flourished, the other, though growing, is comparatively a weakly thing; and so it is said the brothers fared—one prospered and grew rich, the other failed.

We now drove to the ancient and much-restored church of Darley, close to which is a famous yew tree, said to be one of the oldest and largest in the kingdom.

> Of vast circumference and gloom profound,
> This solitary tree! a living thing
> Produced too slowly ever to decay,
> Of form and aspect too magnificent
> To be destroyed.

Then we proceeded to a friend's house, where a hearty welcome awaited us, and where we were entertained with right good Derbyshire hospitality, all the more appreciated after our long wanderings away from kith and kin.

Resting here awhile from our travels, we took the opportunity of inspecting on foot, more closely, some of the many beauties of this picturesque part of a picturesque county, and we came to the conclusion that within a dozen miles of this place there are enough of scenic wonders, pleasant spots, historic mansions, secluded glens, lone moorlands, caverns, and other strange freaks of Nature, to last any man a lifetime.

CHAPTER XXI.

Summer and Autumn—The 'Via Gellia'—Tissington and its Well-dressing—Dove Dale—A Beautiful River—A Moonlight Drive—Loughborough—A Foggy Day—Leicester—Market Harborough—Naseby—Daventry—An Old Inn—A Picturesque Interior—An Ancient Chair—Old-world Hostels—Stony Stratford—Recollections of Scenery—Telford's Road—Home.

THE gay young summer had reached the maturity of autumn. Rich and wonderful were the colours she wore—green trees were touched with orange, red, and yellow. The year was growing old, but she was growing beautiful also. Some there are who call autumn sad, but I cannot see wherein the sadness lies, save that we know the winter is approaching. The colours of autumn are not the colours of sadness; yellow and crimson and orange are not mournful tints. The soft beauties of the tender greens of spring, refreshing and lovely though they are, can hardly compare to the golden glories of the later year. Ask an artist which he deems best? Poets may sing of the spring, but the countless tints of the waning summer are a revelation of beauty, a miracle of colouring. Then the woods are gorgeous with burning reds and yellows, the mountains are clothed with purples, and golden cornfields like amber seas are waving all around. All Nature,

indeed, seems gay and bright, not sad or sombre. Yet cold, dull, cheerless winter is at hand. Aye! that is why we deem the waning of the summer so sorrowful.

But as we journeyed along past the many-coloured woods and purple-tinted hills, we thought the autumn time surpassingly beautiful; there was a slight sharpness, too, in the air which was pleasant. Continuing on our way from Darley, we reached Cromford in due course, and here we left the main track and proceeded up the Via Gellia, a picturesque road winding upwards between wood-embowered hills, with a pretty stream for company. This path was constructed, many years ago, by a certain Mr. Gellia, and was called after him. Alas! for fame; when asking our way to the valley, a native could not understand what place it was we wanted; suddenly he grew enlightened, 'Oh! it's the Via Jelly you wants,' he exclaimed, placing particular emphasis on the Jelly.

Via Jelly or Via Gellia, however, is an exceedingly pretty road; we were sorry when we emerged from its wooded, glen-like seclusion and struck upon an open, bleak, moorland-looking country, where we had the misfortune to cast a shoe. A look round showed us a village not far off, on a hill, and to this we walked in the hopes of finding a blacksmith able to do the necessary. The village, the name of which I have forgotten, struck us as being one of the bleakest and most hard-featured collection of stones and mortar we had ever set eyes upon, wind-swept in all directions, even the hardy grass seemed

to have a struggle to exist here. Still, we managed to get our horse re-shod, and proceeded on our way rejoicing. We had presently a little stream to ford, then a stiff mount, and we came to the picturesque rural hamlet of Tissington, famous for its well-dressing. There are five springs in the village, and one day a year these are profusely decorated with flowers and greenery, after which a special service is held in the church. This interesting ceremony is of very ancient origin, and is one of a very few similar practices of the far-off olden time remaining to us.

> Many precious rites
> And customs of our rural ancestry
> Are gone or stealing from us : this I hope
> Will last for ever.

A simple, peaceful spot is Tissington, and very charming and reposeful did it look as we drove along, with its picturesque cottages and quaint, old-fashioned gardens, bright with the old-world flowers our ancestors so dearly loved. And how lazily the blue smoke curled up from the chimneys, and how fragrant was the odour of burning wood and peat that came to us now and again!

Arriving at the comfortable hostelrie, the Izaak Walton, at Dove Dale, a supreme pleasure awaited us. We had never seen this famous valley before, but had heard so much about it that we quite expected and were prepared to be disappointed with it. However, disappointment was not for us. Indeed, it far exceeded in beauty all our imaginings. It is a spot to dream a summer's day away in, a spot to be remembered but not described. Neither pen

nor pencil, nor both combined, could do justice to the rare beauty of Dove Dale.

Among the many beautiful rivers of fair England few can equal—none can surpass—the unpretentious Dove. Its banks are well wooded; it is not a slothful stream though it is a fishful one, and the scenery through which it flows is both varied and grand. Here and there it sleeps for a while in a pleasant dreamy manner; in its merry youth it tumbles and gambols from rock to rock in a quiet musical fashion, anon it urges its impetuous way past many an imposing boulder, again it glides smoothly along, then, as if weary of tranquillity, it rushes on its course in a lively, sportive mood. Never in its whole journey is it languid or sluggish for a moment. Artists and fishermen love it well—the latter too well, in fact, to afford good sport to so many.

In the evening we once more resumed our wanderings, bound for Derby. The sun was setting in a golden glory midst ruby-tinted clouds behind the grey-blue hills when we started. The moon, too, was up, so we knew when the daylight died we should have her soft silvery light for guidance and for company.

We were detained the whole of the next morning at Derby by the rain. The look-out was wet and cheerless to a degree, but a rising barometer gave us hopes of being able to make a start sometime during the day, and certainly enough towards noon the leaden sky broke up, patches of bright blue showed themselves, and we ordered the horses to, and were

presently bowling merrily along the wet and shining roads. It was a pleasant drive through a pleasant country on to Loughborough, a town that struck us as consisting almost entirely of many narrow and crooked streets.

We left Loughborough in a dense white fog, owing to which we had some difficulty in finding our way, and the horn was in frequent use to avoid a possible collision. The effect of the mist in magnifying objects was very curious—trees and houses loomed up suddenly before us of gigantic dimensions, and everything looked ghostlike and unreal. The silence, too, was very marked, and, except by noticing the traces, we could not tell whether we were on level or hilly ground. The road was a good going one, however, but the scenery was left entirely to our imagination.

As we drove into Leicester the mist turned to rain, and we were glad to get under shelter at the first hotel, and out of the way of the tramways, which by no means tend to make driving a pleasure in this town. It will be remembered that Richard III. slept here on his way to Bosworth Field; the house, however, in which he stopped has long since been pulled down. But what Leicester was most celebrated for in the olden times was its abbey. This was a house of great renown and wealth; many of the English monarchs rested within its walls on their travels, amongst others Richard II. and his queen, and were sumptuously entertained there, but what rendered it especially famous was the death within its sanctuary of Cardinal Wolsey in 1530.

From Leicester to Market Harborough the mist and rain still kept us unwelcome company all the way, and we were not sorry when our stage came to an end and we found ourselves before a cheery fire in a cosy sitting-room of our inn. Market Harborough we discovered to be a pleasant little one-streeted town; our hotel was a comfortable old-fashioned one, with an ostler to match—an entertaining individual who was a stable hand here in the old coaching days, and who told us he remembered the time when over forty coaches passed and repassed each way. 'Then the place was lively,' he said, and life worth living, now the railways have spoilt everything.'

Market Harborough, I have said, is a one-streeted town. In past times the buildings occupied no more ground than they actually stood upon, and there was an ancient proverb to the effect that 'All the grass in Harborough mead won't a parson's gander feed.' This little town was the head-quarters of Charles I. before the fatal fight of Naseby. The king planted his army in a very strong position on a hill near by, but Prince Rupert, with his usual impetuosity, would advance to meet the enemy, and fought consequently at a disadvantage.

From Market Harborough we took a cross country route to Daventry, passing the historic battle ground of Naseby on our way, a peaceful enough looking spot now.

At Daventry we came upon Telford's famous Holyhead road, which we followed all the way to London. And a grand road it is, with easy gradients

and fine scenery. This road was the work of that famous engineer, and was paid for and constructed by Parliament. Others throughout the kingdom, notably the mail road from London to Edinburgh, were planned and would have been carried out, but just then unfortunately railways became talked about, and nothing more was done. Here we found a rambling old inn, that had evidently seen better days, and a pleasant chatty landlord. We were the only visitors in the place, and it appeared to us that travellers in these parts were few and far between; how ever such hotels exist at all—as they do throughout the country—is a problem not easily solved. Local requirements can go but a short way to keep up such establishments; how, then, are they supported? We saw nobody during our stay but the worthy host and a civil, obliging servant, a sort of maid of all work; possibly there was no hostess or other servant.

Towcester was our next resting-place—a somnolent, deserted old town, where everybody seemed half asleep, and the silence was marked. The clatter of our horses' hoofs and the general rattle we made driving into the place appeared strangely loud and disturbing. There were two or three hotels, but none looked particularly inviting, though they had all evidently been of considerable importance in the old coaching days, judging from their arch doorways and ample yards beyond—yards surrounded of old by extensive stabling, now going to sad decay, or converted into small tenements and tumbledown outbuildings.

Of the different hostelries, we selected the one

that appeared to us to be the most promising, as far as we could judge from outside appearances; entering which we found ourselves within a very ancient building, with rooms of low-beamed ceilings, and quaint old-fashioned diamond-paned windows, a picturesque interior, with genuine antique furniture, somewhat like the house, the worse for age and wear, but solid and honest looking, and therefore pleasing to the eye. In our sitting-room was a quaint old carved oak chair, in which we were told Charles I. had sat, which might or might not be true, but the chair was old enough and respectable enough for the tradition. This chair, judging from the history we were given of it, and the notable persons who were said to have owned it from time to time, must have had rather a remarkable career. It was a genuine antique, at any rate, well designed and curiously carved, and very different from the general run of Wardour Street rubbish. Indeed, we offered to purchase it, but we were told it was an heirloom and not for sale.

Soundly we slept that night in spite of our old-world surroundings, and we awoke to a glorious morning, a morning of soft sunshine and gentle breeze, one of those days that make it a sin to be indoors, and so we arranged for an early start. In fact, our hotel rather depressed us; it was somewhat a gloomy abode, and our rooms were of a sombre and depressing order. The fresh air of the free open country and the bright cheery sunlight were a pleasant change from the close, stuffy rooms.

It was a pleasant drive on to Stony Stratford,

through an essentially English-looking landscape, a gentle undulating country of rich green meadows, of waving fields of golden grain, of contented looking homesteads and cottages, with here and there an old grey church tower peeping forth bounded by a dreamy distance of circling blue. We met as we journeyed along slowly crawling harvest teams and waggons laden with ripe yellow corn; and more than once we pulled up and went a-blackberrying, much to our enjoyment, amongst the tangled brambles of the delightfully neglected hedgerows. Altogether it was a road suggestive of homeliness and rural content, a road that gave us a succession of rustic pictures and delightful prospects long to be remembered.

It is not only at the time a scene pleases, there is the after gratification, when sitting by the fireside in gloomy winter, miles away from the spot, of recalling many a bright sunny picture of what one has seen, sweet memories that live in the mind for ever. Living so much out of doors, in close communion with Nature in all her many moods, we had learnt the secret of obtaining a vast amount of enjoyment out of our commonplace everyday surroundings.

At Stony Stratford we found another old-world inn, but of a more cheerful description than the one at Towcester. Here we made our mid-day halt, and in the afternoon proceeded on to Fenny Stratford. From here we proceeded by a hilly road, which afforded us when on the high ground glorious prospects of a far extending wooded country, on to Dunstable, just before arriving at which town we

passed through a long and deep cutting through the chalk hills, possibly the most extensive bit of road levelling in the kingdom. We could still trace where the old way had laboriously climbed the steep ridge before this improvement had been carried out under that famous engineer of pre-railway times, Telford. St. Albans was our last resting place away from home, and the knowledge that the next day would end our most enjoyable rovings made us feel quite sorrowful and depressed.

In describing our wanderings, my difficulty has been that of the artist, who cannot represent all he sees; the task is what to omit. So in our most delightful tour, each day we saw so much of interest, so many changing scenes, did I attempt to describe all, many volumes would be required instead of one. Yet the task of leaving out so much of what is interesting and beautiful, without even a remark, is no easy matter. Any one week of our drive gave us enough experiences, sights, and scenes to fill a book alone. I can only hope to have entered somewhat into the spirit of our journey; we alone who took it can see all, and know how poor and inadequate must any description be. We have traversed through as beautiful country as the world can show—the most beautiful we thought, and still so think—we have seen old abbeys, ruined castles, moated manor houses, stately halls, and quaint old-world towns and villages. We have taken our ease at delightful old-fashioned inns of the olden days, inns built for comfort above all; we have climbed heathery hills and wild moorlands; through rich pastoral lands, by silvery lake

and gloomy tarn, by impetuous torrents and placid rivers our course has laid.

Such a journey of a thousand miles of varied beauty and old romance could be taken in no other country. Peaceful, homelike, mellow England, fair thou art all lovers of beauty know, but how surpassingly fair only those can tell who have day by day wandered along thy forsaken country roads and rural lanes, far from busy towns!

And now, kind reader, our rovings are over, my work of love is done. I have only to bid you Farewell!

INDEX.

Abbeys:
  Bolton, 346–349
  Easby, 336–339
  Fountains, 341–342
  Furness, 183–187
Ambergate, 104
Appleby, 291–295
Ashby-de-la-Zouch, 84–91
Ashford, 372

Bakewell, 372
Barnard Castle, 313–316
Barnsley, 357
Belle Isle, 199–201
Belper, 103–104
Bisham Abbey, 22
Blenheim, 41
Borrowdale, 234–237
Bowes, 313
Bowness, 198
Bray Church, 13
Brough, 296–306
Buttermere, 242–243
Buxton, 367–368

Carlisle, 274–277
Cartmel Church, 180–182
Castles:
  Appleby, 292
  Ashby-de-la-Zouch, 89–90
  Barnard, 314–316
  Bowes, 313
  Brough, 297–298
Castles (continued):
  Brougham, 286–287
  Dacre, 256–257
  Harewood, 353
  Johnson, 263
  Knaresborough, 344
  Penrith, 285
  Richmond, 337–338
  Windsor, 12
Castleton, 364–367
Catterick Bridge, 325–336
Chapel House, 46
Chesterfield, 136
Clapham, 163, 165–166
Coniston, 210
Countess's Pillar, 288–289
Coventry, 72–76
Cromford, Vale of, 105–106

Dallam Tower, 174
Darley, 376
Daventry, 382
Derby, 98–100, 380
Dotheboys Hall, 312
Dove Dale, 379–380
Druids' Circle, 246–248
Dunmail Raise, 223
Dunstable, 385

Eamont Bridge, 257–259
Ecclefechan, 270
Eden, Vale of, 289

Falls :
Airey Force, 255–256
Dungeon Gill, 218
Lodore, 232
Fox Hall, 320–322
Foxhouse Inn, 362
Fox Memorial, 81

Grange, 177–180
Great Marlow, 20
Greta Bridge, 313
Gretna Green, 273
Giggleswick Well, 162

Haddon Hall, 373–375
Halifax, 150–152
Hardwick Hall, 129–136
Harewood, 352–354
Harrogate, 343
Hart's Horn Tree, 289
Hathersage, 363
Hawkshead, 208–209
Hesket, 279–282
Honister Pass, 239
Huddersfield, 148–149

Ilkley, 350

Keighley, 156–157
Keswick, 230
King Arthur's Round Table, 257
Kirkby Lonsdale, 167–169
Kirtlebridge, 270–272
Knaresborough, 344–346

Lady Holm, 202
Lakes, &c. :
Blea Tarn, 216–217
Bowscale Tarn, 249
Brothers' Water, 253
Coniston, 209
Derwentwater, 230–231
Grasmere, 219–220
Langdale Tarn, 215
Thirlmere, 228–229
Ullswater, 251
Windermere, 191, 203
Leeds, 355
Leicester, 381
Levins Hall, 175
Little John's Grave, 363
Lockerby, 265
Londonderry, 340
Long Compton, 50
Loughborough, 381
Low Wood, 202–204

Matlock, 107–119
Market Harborough, 382
Milnthorpe, 170–173
Moffat, 260–262
Mountains, &c. :
Blencathara, 249
Coniston Old Man, 209
Crich Hill, 121
Eagle Crag, 229
Hartfell, 263
Helm Crag, 223
Helvellyn, 227
Honister Crag, 238–239
Langdale Pikes, 216–217
Mam Tor, 367
Oker Hill, 357
Raven's Crag, 229
Scawfell Pike, 279
Skiddaw, 244
Stybarrow Crag, 252

Newby Bridge, 189
Newlands, Vale of, 243–244
Nuneaton, 79

Otley, 352
Oxford, 35

Peak Railway, 107
Penistone, 144–146
Penrith, 283–286
Portinscale, 230

Rere Cross, 308–309
Ripon, 341

Rivers:
Brathay, 206
Dove, 380
Greta, 319
Lune, 169
Rothay, 206
Swale, 325
Tees, 317–318
Rokeby, 319
Rollich Stones, 45
Rowsley, 375

Seatoller, 236
Settle, 160–162
Sheffield, 136–140
Slough, 9–11
Smeathwaite, 229
Spital Inn, 311
St. Albans, 386
Stancliff, 375
Strid, the, 349
Stoke Pogis, 12
Stony Stratford, 384–385

Temple Sowerby, 290
Threlkeld, 248
Tissington, 379
Towcester, 383–384
Tredington, 67

Ulverston, 182–187

Via Gellia, 378
Wharfe, Valley of, 351
Wharncliffe, 143
Wingfield Manor, 124–128
Woodstock, 37–39
Wortley, 359
Wyngates, 365–366
Wythburn, 225

S. & H.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET


00058557

Digitized with financial assistance from



HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC

WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018